EMINENT ACTORS

Edited by

WILLIAM ARCHER

MACKLIN

Thomas Welch.

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EMINENT ACTORS

EDITED BY WILLIAM ARCHER

CHARLES MACKLIN

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CHARLES MACKLIN

BY

EDWARD ABBOTT PARRY

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1891

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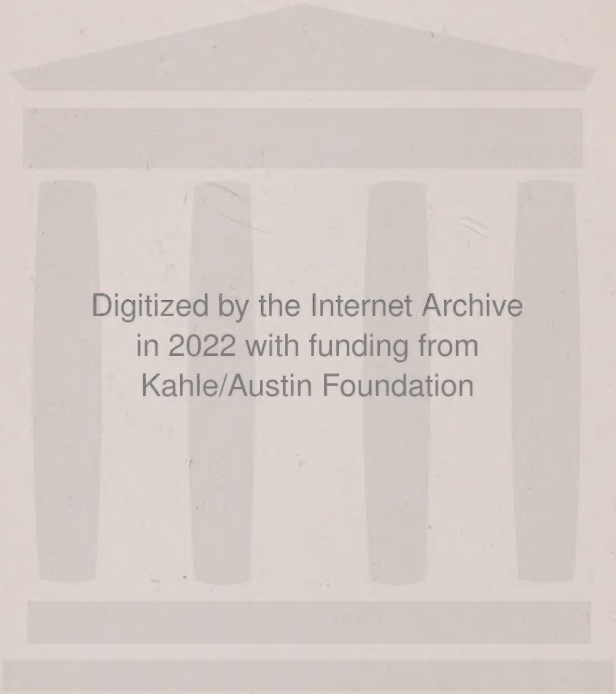
PREFACE.

In writing a biography of a man like Charles Macklin, one should, as it seems to me, endeavour to collect from the various records of the time contemporary portraits and criticism of the man and his fellows. These should be given in their own language and without paraphrase, wherever the scope and nature of the extracts make quotation possible. I must admit that the following out of this plan is apt to make a book appear, to a great extent, a work of paste and scissors, to which a kindly critic would perhaps add—and research. Be this as it may, I am still of opinion that the research, the scissors, and the paste, in the order named, are of greater value to the reader than the biographer's pen. And it is for this reason that I have endeavoured, wherever possible, to find and use the words of others instead of my own.

EDWARD A. PARRY.

Manchester,
1890.



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CHARLES MACKLIN.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

When Charles Macklin, comedian, passed quietly away on the morning of the 11th of July, 1797, it is doubtful if the world—even the metropolitan world—troubled its head much about the matter. He had tottered off the stage eight years before, and from that time had haunted the theatres and the coffee-houses, a mere specimen of human decay, waiting for his release. And the day of his respite from earthly ills was so long in coming, that, when it did come, only a few intimate friends knew or cared to know that Charles Macklin had gone to his last account. Very soon, however, the world began to consider, with not unnatural curiosity, about the man who had at length passed away; and before long memoirs began to be written, anecdotes to be remembered, and reminiscences to be recalled.

Macklin was the contemporary of the eighteenth century. He lived to some extent side by side with Cibber and Booth, he was the companion and rival of Quin and Garrick, and was still upon the stage of life when the Kembles played in London. Such a life was unique in

the annals of the stage, and it would have been curious indeed if writers of the day had refrained from stories and anecdotes of such a man. These, then, abound, vague and uncircumstantial after their kind, but nevertheless, supplemented by facts, they give one a passable portrait of a remarkable man, and a not unsatisfactory history of an extraordinary career.

At his death, Macklin was believed to be ninety-seven years of age ; but, not content with a life prolonged to these years, his biographers have endeavoured to show that he was at least a hundred and seven. The evidence for and against these positions is by no means important or conclusive ; but the question has occupied so much space in theatrical and other records, that it cannot now be lightly cast aside. So bewildering, however, do I find the warfare of histrionic antiquarians which continuously rages round this knotty point, that I feel disinclined to pronounce a definite opinion upon the matter, or indeed do more than sum up the testimony upon which the two assumptions are based, and leave the decision to a jury of readers.

The main lines of the controversy are to be found in the three biographies of Macklin by Congreve, Kirkman, and Cooke. The memoir by Francis Aspey Congreve was published in 1798, and is a pamphlet of some sixty pages, containing an interesting and accurate account of the actor. With regard to the date of his birth, Congreve states that the matter is involved in some doubt, but mentions the year 1699, at the same time telling us that his birthplace was "the Barony of Quinshoven, one of the northernmost districts of Ireland." James Thomas Kirkman, of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, published a second and somewhat inflated biography of Macklin in 1799. Kirkman describes himself as "a

near relative, bred up and living for upwards of twenty years" with the actor; and John Taylor, in his "Records," explains the relationship by hinting that he was, in fact, Macklin's son. Be this as it may, he is the first person who publicly asserted that Macklin was a centenarian, in which he was followed by the actor's third biographer, William Cooke.

William Cooke was a well-known amateur of the drama, as the old playgoers were called, a lover of the stage, a frequenter of the pit, and a keen critic. He was born at Cork, but his father was of English family. He came to London somewhat late in life, and was called to the bar in 1776. While a student at the Temple, he became acquainted with Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, Murphy, Macklin, and Foote, and was one of the members of the Essex-Head Club. He published several tracts on the French Revolution, a treatise on "The Elements of Dramatic Criticism," and the memoirs of both Foote and Macklin. His Life of Macklin, first published anonymously in 1804, is an entertaining and comparatively reliable volume, though we must not accept with implicit confidence all he has to say about Macklin's early years. Though less profuse and vague than Kirkman, he does not seem to me, in this part of his book, more trustworthy than his fellow-biographer. The fact is, that at the time of his death, very little was known of Macklin's early life. He had been born at a time and in a country where registers and records were almost unknown, and no one can read the complete details of his early life, as given by Kirkman, without a suspicion that the writer was a man of considerable inventive genius. Nevertheless, the statements of Kirkman and Cooke should be set down, in order that every one may form his own opinion as to Macklin's age.

Kirkman tells us that Charles Macklin, whose real name was Charles M'Laughlin, was descended from one Terence M'Laughlin, a landowner of County Down, whose son William married Miss Alice O'Flanagan, the daughter of John O'Flanagan, a proprietor of large estates in Westmeath. The M'Laughlins considered themselves to be descendants of the ancient kings of Ireland, and once a year the head of the family held a solemn court, which the relations attended.

"I have myself been once at this meeting," said Macklin, in after years, "and could not help being exceedingly impressed with the ceremony of my introduction to our Chief, who, as a relation, received me most generously. I there beheld the union of state and simplicity, for which former ages were so remarkable ; and observed, that the Chief had all the great officers and every other appendage to a court. These meetings, Sir, were known to Government ; but, as they were perfectly innocent, and their proceedings inoffensive, they were tolerated."

William M'Laughlin, continues Kirkman, commanded a troop of horse in the army of James II., and was greatly distinguished for his valour, loyalty, and zeal. He had one daughter, named Mary, and one son, Charles, who was born two months previous to the battle of the Boyne—that is to say, in April or May of 1690. This is the date that Kirkman and Cooke seek to establish beyond doubt, and the following are some of the proofs put forward in support of their assertion. Kirkman revels in his self-appointed task, and it would be impossible to set down at length all the irrelevant conjectures and suppositions which he substitutes for evidence. In the first place, we are asked to remember that there were no registers of births, deaths, and marriages kept in Ireland in 1690, and that it was no

uncommon custom in Irish families to engrave the date of a child's birth upon brass or horn, or, for want of that, with gunpowder upon the child itself, that evidence of its age might be forthcoming. Unfortunately for us, and happily for Mr. Kirkman, who makes at least one good chapter of the matter, no such steps were taken about the birth of Charles Macklin. "Nevertheless," says the sanguine Kirkman, "the most satisfactory oral testimony can be brought forward."

"Mrs. Elizabeth Macklin, relict of the late inimitable *Shylock* (under whose immediate auspices this work is given to the public), has assured the author, and is ready to testify the fact upon oath (were it necessary), that the actual circumstance of his having been born two months previous to the memorable battle of the Boyne, has been repeatedly communicated to her by a person of the name of *Mary Millar*, who lived servant with the mother of Charles, during his minority, and who had her own age marked in her arm by gunpowder, which mark, or register, of birth Mrs. Macklin had frequent opportunities of seeing during the time Mary Millar lived servant with her in Dublin. And this circumstance is the more accurate and remarkable, because the difference between the age of Charles and Mary Millar was known to be exactly ten years."

No harm can be done by setting down Mr. Cooke's account of the same evidence, which is, perhaps, a little more explicit, though hardly less unsatisfactory than Kirkman's. Cooke tells us that—

"There was living in the city of Cork, about the year 1750, a woman of the name of Ellen Byrne, the wife of a journeyman printer, who was a first cousin of Macklin's mother, and who lived in the family at the time of his birth; and this woman, who always bore a decent and respectable character, has often declared to many people (and in particular to the late Mr. Charles Rathband, editor of the

General Evening Post, a man of some research and unquestionable veracity), that her cousin, Charles Macklin, was two months old at the battle of the Boyne, July 1, 1690. And that, a few days previous to that celebrated battle, his mother, one of her brothers, and herself, travelled six miles, from Drogheda to a neighbouring village, for safety, carrying with them young Charley (as she called him) in a kish;* and that they resided in this village some years afterwards."

Besides this, there is a story that a strolling player named Ware, who was born about 1702, said, in his old age, that he remembered Macklin as a full-grown man when he himself was a boy, and this wretched hearsay, coupled with an anecdote about Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, is all that Kirkman and Cooke can produce in support of their theory. Cooke tells the Berkeley anecdote as follows :—

"When Mr. Geo. Monk Berkley, grandson to the famous Dr. Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, was a student in the Middle Temple, from the celebrity of Macklin's character as an actor and writer, he expressed a wish to be acquainted with him. Macklin fixed on an evening, and at the meeting thus accosted him : 'Young man, I am happy to see you. I knew your famous grandfather very well. We were at college together, and he was always reckoned the *cleverest lad* in our university ; but alas ! alas ! he has long since gone, and I am here still.'

"When Mr. Berkley visited his father in the long vacation, he told this anecdote to him, at which he was much surprised, and said it was almost impossible, as the bishop, his father, had been dead near forty years, and was then turned of seventy ! 'He indeed might be a fellow when Macklin was a youngster, but not, I should think, otherwise.' 'I don't know,' said the son, 'Macklin's age ; but this I know, that his manner of calling him a *pretty lad*, and his often repeating it, struck me so forcibly that I

* Wicker basket.

could not but believe it, and at the same time, filled me with so much surprize that it brought me back to the days of Noah.'"

Of these two stories the one about Ware is quite worthless, unless there is some proof of his age, and the Berkeley anecdote helps us very little, unless one knows the date at which it is supposed to have taken place. Bishop Berkeley was born in 1685, and died in 1753; so this meeting with Mr. Berkeley ought, according to the text, to have taken place about 1793, when Macklin's memory was not in its best condition. Then, too, if we are to consider the story as anything more important than the pleasant invention of some society gossip, it is worth remembering that Macklin never was at college, except in the menial capacity of badgeman, and Kirkman suggests that this was somewhere about the year 1710. Now, Berkeley was M.A. and Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1707, so that, even if we accept the anecdote as a faithful and accurate account of what Macklin said, we must convict him of romancing when he boasted that "we were at college together," and spoke of remembering the bishop as a "pretty lad." I confess that I regard the anecdote as of very little value. Its pedigree and history are too obscure to inspire one with confidence in its accuracy. The repetition of spoken words does not lead to exactness or precision, and, even when two parties enter a witness-box with the most faithful desire to repeat a conversation, one finds their stories coloured and altered by their own knowledge of outlying facts. I do not believe for a moment that Macklin, if he spoke of Berkeley at all, ever used the phrase "pretty lad." Whatever he did say, that, at least, is a gloss on the original anecdote. An old man, looking back to the time when he was a youth of, say,

fourteen or fifteen, does not remember his college seniors of nineteen or twenty as "pretty lads," but rather as grown men, giants whose shapes and actions look large indeed across the intervening space of years.*

If it was generally believed in Macklin's later years that he was a centenarian, how came the enterprising publishers of Opie's portrait of the actor in 1792 to

* It is possible to put a more favourable construction upon this anecdote. The date of Macklin's connection with Trinity College is purely conjectural. Kirkman, placing his birth in 1690, states that he remained a badgeman until he was twenty-one—that is, until 1711. But he probably entered upon service as a mere boy, say at thirteen. Even supposing him to have been fifteen, his connection with Trinity College would date from 1705, when Berkeley was a youth of twenty, and was still two years short of his degree. The fact that Macklin spoke of him as a "pretty lad" seems to me the strongest (indeed the only considerable) piece of evidence in favour of the 1690 theory. Berkeley was noted for his beauty; but, as the actor and the bishop moved in very different circles in later life, Berkeley's personal appearance would scarcely be known to Macklin, except as a reminiscence from early days. At any rate, we can scarcely suppose that when young Berkeley was presented to Macklin, the old actor set to work with deliberate ingenuity to tell a circumstantial lie. Can we conceive him saying to himself, "I never saw this young gentleman's grandfather, but I want to make it appear that we were at college together. Now, I know that Bishop Berkeley was a handsome man, so I shall be quite safe in saying that I remember him as a 'pretty lad' at college"? This process of thought would imply an inconceivable alertness in the old man's faculties, as well as an incredible devotion to mendacity as a fine art. It is much simpler to suppose that Macklin actually remembered Berkeley as a "pretty lad," of from eighteen to twenty-two, at Trinity College. His use of the phrase, "We were at college together," implies a desire to leave his own academic status in the vague, but does not necessarily mean that he was simply romancing. Of course this argument proceeds entirely on the somewhat rash assumption that the interview between old Macklin and young Berkeley really occurred, and was correctly reported, so far as the phrase "pretty lad" is concerned.—W. A.

speak of him as "in his 93rd year"? What is even more astonishing is that, though Kirkman was one of the chief mourners at Macklin's funeral, his literary executor, and a man of some authority, according to his own account, in the household of the deceased, he should yet have suffered the coffin-plate to be engraved:

MR. CHARLES MACKLIN,
Comedian,
Died 11th July,
1797,
Aged 97 years.

This coffin-plate was a great stumbling-block to those who wished to believe in Macklin's hundred years; and a story was current, told with more of less circumstance, of the *mistake* being discovered, and the plate hastily rectified before the coffin was placed in the grave. However, in 1859, when alterations were being made at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, a copy was made of the inscription on the plate, which still contained the original words, wholly unaltered, "Aged 97 years."

The fact is, the centenarian theory, whatever it may be worth, was clearly not started in Macklin's lifetime, and his friends seem to have been satisfied with his own statement, "that he was born in the last year of the last century." The all and sundry reasons given by his biographers, why Macklin at some period of his life put back the hands of time ten years, seem to show their little belief in their own conjecture. It was to please a mistress, to hide his want of education, or "for the accommodation of his daughter," who was becoming older than she cared to own. Any reason would do, and the biographers take no pains to agree upon an identical one. Nor do they attempt to meet what is in

itself the main objection to their theory, that it makes Macklin—who was, from all accounts, a youth of a restless, energetic nature—content to remain at school until he is nineteen, to commence strolling player at the somewhat cold-blooded age of thirty, and not to get any engagement in London until he is forty-three. All this is, to say the least of it, improbable, and nearly every anecdote that I have read of his early life accentuates the improbability. Indeed, it is upon a close consideration of the general probabilities of the case, rather than upon any destructive analysis of his biographers' hearsay evidence, that I see no reason for rejecting Macklin's own statement already quoted, "that he was born in the last year of the last century."

It may be well to follow briefly Kirkman's statement of the early life and adventures of his hero and his family's history, without, however, placing a too implicit credence in all its details. It appears that William M'Laughlin, Charles's father, having commanded a troop of horse in James's army at the battle of the Boyne, still remained faithful to the losing side after that disastrous conflict, and was accordingly persecuted with the utmost rigour, and his estates duly confiscated. Thereupon he seems to have retired to Westmeath, living there in obscurity, but, ultimately emerging with a view of bettering his condition, he came to live in Dublin. Life in a town was, however, to his broken spirit even more difficult and impossible than life in the country. "And although," says Kirkman, in a somewhat contradictory panegyric, "he was a man of extraordinary strength of body and equal vigour of mind, yet he never recovered his spirits after the battle of the Boyne. He died in December, 1704, literally of a broken heart—a victim to misapplied loyalty and mistaken generosity." I might

here interject the statement of Cooke, that Macklin remembered his father as a rank Presbyterian, and his mother as a bigoted papist, doing so rather to call attention to the difficulties one is placed in by some of these so-called recollections of Macklin than for any other reason. For it is hard to understand why a rank Presbyterian should command a troop of horse in James's army, and suffer afterwards for the Catholic cause. Be this as it may, Mrs. M'Laughlin having lost her husband, Kirkman now tells us, with all the apologies of a genteel lodging-house keeper, how this poor but aristocratic lady, "to better the condition of her children, which was her darling object," condescended in 1707 to marry honest Luke O'Meally, the landlord of The Eagle in Werburgh Street, Dublin. Macklin, in after life, bore testimony to his having been a kind and tender father to him; and though he seems to have caused the death of Mary M'Laughlin, the actor's only sister, by storming at her in a fit of ungovernable passion, there is no reason to believe that, when he restrained himself from these violent fits of temper, he was anything but a decent and kindly man.

Young Charles, who was eight or eighteen, as the reader pleases, was now sent to board at an academy in Island Bridge, a small village about a mile west of Dublin. He had, perhaps, previously been taught to read in Irish or bad English by his mother's brother, who was a priest. The school at Island Bridge was kept by a Scotchman named Nicholson; and Kirkman tells us that "it was from the cruelty of a pedagogue that Mr. Macklin, almost in infancy, imbibed that invincible prejudice against the Scotch which adhered to him through a long life." There may be some truth in this, though Macklin, in some manuscript notes, published

after his death in the *Monthly Mirror*, mentions a principle of justice that Nicholson constantly enforced, which was, "Never offend or injure without making atonement." And Macklin remembers, with approval, that Nicholson took care that the weakly boys were defended from the strong.

But I can understand that Nicholson found Master M'Laughlin a tough subject to educate. He must have been something of a hero at that Island Bridge academy, and certainly a thorn in the flesh of the Scotch pedagogue, who seems to have flogged him for six days in the week, and begged his mother to take him away on the seventh. For Charley M'Laughlin could not only box and cudgel, and swim like a duck, diving off the masts of ships, or leaping off the old bridge into the Liffey, but he had a nasty habit—"talent," Kirkman calls it—of mimicry, "which he exercised to the continual annoyance of the pedant, by counterfeiting alternately the voices of him and his wife Harriet, and calling aloud upon either, in the voice of the other so exactly, as to baffle all their vigilance in guarding against his pranks." He even gave the parrot hints in mimicry, and at length became so noted for all manner of hardiment and devilry, that he gained the nickname of "Charles a Molluchth," or in English, "Wicked Charley," which is really the most important and luminous fact that I have at present learned of his early history.

It would be pleasant, however, to think that one might except the anecdote of his performance of Monimia from among the myths that surround his early life. Kirkman sets this performance down as occurring in 1708, but I have a shrewd suspicion that he arranges his earlier dates merely to suit his own theory of Macklin's age, and does not derive them from any more worthy sources of

information than his own imagination. Cooke's account of the incident is, in any case, preferable to Kirkman's, and the exact date of its occurrence is unimportant.

"In the neighbourhood of Mrs. Macklin," says Cooke, "there lived a near relation of the Besborough family, a widow lady of considerable fortune, taste, and humanity, who, seeing young Macklin running about her grounds, and observing him to be a boy of some spirit, sharpness, and enterprise, hospitably took him under her roof, in order to rescue him from those vices and follies which a life of idleness, particularly in young minds, is but too apt to produce. Here he was further instructed in reading and writing; and here it was that Macklin (who often expressed his gratitude to his benefactress for this kindness) felt the first necessity of attending in some respect to education and the order of civilized life, by being under the example and restriction of a regular family, and the awe of a woman of her rank and kindness.

"While he was under the protection of this lady, the tragedy of *The Orphan* was got up during the Christmas holidays, amongst some young relations of the family; when, in casting the parts (however strange to tell), the character of Monimia was assigned for young Macklin. To those who recollect the figure and the cast of countenance of the veteran, it must be difficult to reconcile the possibility of his performing this part at any time of life with the smallest degree of propriety; however, if we are to take his own word for it (which is all the authority that can be adduced), he not only *looked* the *gentle* Monimia, but performed it with every degree of applause and encouragement. The play was repeated three times with great applause before several of the surrounding gentry and tenants, and every time he felt himself acquire additional reputation."

Kirkman gives much the same account of the performance, except that he sets the scene of it at Mr. Nicholson's school, and gives us the lady's name as Mrs. Pilkington.

It was this first success, perhaps, that led Macklin to turn his attention to the theatre, and planted in his young mind that lasting ambition, which enabled him to conquer, one by one, the obstacles, that nature and the accidents of his life placed between him and the highest honours of his chosen profession.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST APPEARANCES (TO 1735).

We may pass lightly over the youthful adventures of Charles Macklin. They are neither well accredited, nor, indeed, are some of them altogether creditable to their hero. But we must remember that in those early years he lived a wild, roving, hand-to-mouth life, full of scrapes and disasters, but tending not unnaturally towards the footlights. He seems, after his *début* as Monimia, to have run away from home with two scapegrace companions, and made for London, the adventurers' Eldorado, with a small capital, the bulk of which (£9) Macklin had stolen from his mother. The runaways lived magnificently in London for nearly a month, visiting all the places of entertainment, until they found their purse empty, their hopes at zero. One of his companions entered the army; the second took to the road, which in due course led him to the Tyburn scaffold; while Macklin entered the service of a buxom widow, who kept a public-house in the Borough. This house was frequented by a company of mountebanks, who exhibited low drolls, pantomimes, tumbling, etc.

"Here," says Kirkman, "Macklin, by dint of genius and a high flow of spirits, became the delight of all who frequented the house. He sung for them, he danced, he mimicked, he spouted, and he played the droll, insomuch

that his fame spread abroad, and the house was every night filled with respectable opulent dealers. Clubs and meetings were instituted for the purpose of enjoying the entertainment he afforded. In short, he became a most pleasing and popular character in that circle, and more than trebled the income of the house by his talents."

So valuable was the lad to the proprietress of the house, that she is said to have contracted a marriage with him at one of those "Beggar-making shops," as they were called, which flourished at this time. A Fleet-marriage may have been performed, but we may doubt if Macklin was ever the legal husband of the buxom widow. Some friends of his family appear to have heard of his situation, and by threats and entreaties made him break away from the attractions of the Borough, and return to Dublin. Here, it is said, he for a time took a situation as *badgeman* at Trinity College, and maybe used the opportunities thus afforded him to pick up some crumbs of learning that were scattered about his master's table. Here it is possible he may have seen Berkeley, who did not leave Ireland until 1713, even if he did not know him as a "pretty lad," as the story goes. It is a pleasant trait in Macklin's character, that he was never too proud to remember the menial position in which he then served, and in "Macready's Reminiscences" a story is told which seems to show that he did undoubtedly, at some period of his life, act as *badgeman* or *scout* * at Trinity College, and that the fact was well known in Dublin.

"The custom was for these servants to wait in the courts of the college, in attendance on the calls of the students. To every shout of 'Boy!' the scout first in turn replied, 'What

* I believe the modern name for a *badgeman* at Trinity College is a *skip*.

number?' and, on its announcement, went up to the room denoted for his orders. After Macklin, by his persevering industry, had gained a name as author and actor, in one of his engagements at the Dublin Theatre, some unruly young men caused a disturbance, when Macklin, in very proper terms, rebuked them for their indecent behaviour. The audience applauded, but one of the rioters, thinking to put him down by reference to his early low condition, with contemptuous bitterness shouted out, 'Boy!' Poor Macklin for a moment lost his presence of mind, but, recollecting himself, modestly stepped forward, and with manly complacency responded, 'What number?' It is unnecessary to add that the plaudits of the house fully avenged him on the brutality of his insulters."

How long he remained at Trinity College I do not know. Kirkman says that, after a short period of this servitude, he made a second excursion to London, playing Harlequin and such-like parts with a strolling company of tumblers, wire-dancers, and mummers, at Hockley-in-the-Hole, near Clerkenwell Green. Throughout the eighteenth century Hockley-in-the-Hole was famous for bull-baiting, bear-baiting, sword and cudgel playing, and all kinds of rough and brutal sport. It was the home of the lowest class of women, who, with the rowdies and bullies of the city, frequented its neighbourhood. From this place Macklin was, it is said, again rescued by his friends, and restored to Dublin and his position of *badgeman*—a story which seems scarcely credible when one comes to know the independent character of the man. Kirkman wants us to believe that after this he refused an honourable position in the German army, which he might have obtained through a relation who was a captain in that service. I confess that I can place little or no reliance upon the alleged order of these events. For our purpose it is perhaps sufficient

that, after some years of wild riotous youth, he found himself arrived at Bristol, probably early in the seventeen twenties, at a time when a company of strolling players had recently opened a small theatre there with permission of the mayor.

At this time there was certainly no regular theatre in Bristol, and, indeed, as late as 1773 we find the sober inhabitants of the city ineffectually petitioning the House of Commons not to grant a licence to the Bristol Theatre Royal. The earliest theatre in Bristol about which anything is known seems to have been the theatre at St. Jacob's Well, though Mr. Richard Jenkins, in his "Memoirs of the Bristol Stage" (1826), mentions the localities of some previous ventures in theatrical building. The erection of the St. Jacob's Well Theatre seems to have taken place about 1726, and it was built for Mr. John Hippisley, the original Peachum in *The Beggars' Opera.*

"Mr. Hippisley's theatre," says Jenkins, "was situated at the foot of a pleasant hill, called Brandon, which is on the north-west side of this city (the boon, as it is said, of Queen Elizabeth to the fair maidens of Bristol). . . . Behind the theatre was another hill called Clifton, a field belonging to which was only separated from the back courtyard of the playhouse by a hedge and low wall. Here many curious but economic persons of both sexes stood for whole hours to catch a glimpse, however transient, of some favourite actor or actress as he or she went along the said yard, which (such was the inconvenience of the building) the performer was obliged to do on passing from the right-hand side of the stage to the left."

This theatre was situated a quarter of a mile from the city, and, there not being any lamps in that direction, the audience had to trudge their way on dark nights along a dirty road called Limekilns-lane. When there

was a benefit of a favourite performer, the stage (according to the general custom at that date) was partly fitted up with benches, scenery was an impossibility, and the actors played their parts on a few square yards of boards. Such was the state of the Bristol theatre about 1727, when, as a local satirist sings—

> "Av'RICE sat brooding in a whitewashed cell,
> And PLEASURE had a *hut* at Jacob's Well."

The first Bristol playbill of which I have seen any record is dated 1743, and that refers to Mr. Hippisley as playing at Bristol. It is, therefore, more than probable that Macklin, when he first came to Bristol, had not even so good a theatre as that of St. Jacob's Well in which to exhibit his powers, and that Kirkman is right in suggesting that Macklin's company of strollers played in some convenient barn or temporary building.

Macklin—who had not at that time given up his father's name, M'Laughlin—soon made the acquaintance of the players on his arrival at Bristol, and is said to have made "his first appearance on any stage" as Richmond in *Richard III.* Kirkman, who is now approaching the region of facts and dates, gives the following extraordinary, but not perhaps over-coloured, picture of Macklin's life as a strolling player :—

"Sometimes," he says, "he was an architect, and knocked up the stage and seats in a barn; sometimes he wrote an opening Prologue, or a parting Epilogue, for the Company: at others, he wrote a song, complimentary and adulatory to the village they happened to play in, which he always adapted to some sprightly popular air, and sung himself; and he often was champion, and stood forward to repress the persons who were accustomed to intrude upon and be rude to the actors. His circle of acting was more enlarged than Garrick's; for, in one night, he played Antonio and

Belvidera in *Venice Preserved*, Harlequin in the entertainment, sung three humorous songs between the acts, and indulged the audience with an Irish jig between the play and the entertainment."

These talents soon made him famous in Bristol, Wales, and the surrounding country. From 1725 to 1730 he must have been continually adding to his renown in those districts, and taking possession of all the leading parts. He was already a "star," but he shone in a lonely and obscure corner of the world. Then, as now, an actor's ambition made him careless of the applause of country localities, except in so far as it paved the way to the metropolis, where alone glory and gold were to be won.

The history of his first essays on the London boards is involved in obscurity. He may have appeared as early as 1725 at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in the part of Alcander in Dryden and Lee's *Œdipus*. Again in September, 1730, he is said to have acted Sir Charles Freeman in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, at Lee and Harper's great booth in the Bowling Green, Southwark. This was a noted place for theatrical entertainments situated behind the Marshalsea. During the annual fair time, which lasted about a fortnight in September, continuous performances were held there. Victor remembers Boheme, the actor, making his first appearance there in the part of Menelaus, "in the best droll I ever saw, called *The Siege of Troy*."

> "Harper and Lee their Trojan horse display,
> Troy's burnt, and Paris killed, nine times a day."

Nine performances a day do not suggest a high class of drama, but no doubt the actors were glad of any engagement that brought them within the neighbourhood

of the London theatres. From Southwark Macklin went to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where we know for certain that he played on December 4, 1730, in Fielding's *Coffee House Politician.* Cooke tells us that Macklin in his old days used to say that he *made* the play. Here I cannot but think that his memory must have been failing, or, rather, that he remembered with advantages the part he had taken in the success. In the printed edition of the play, his name—spelt Maclean—is put to Poser, a part of four and a half lines; but his biographer, Congreve, says that, "Poser being over in the first act, he appeared again in the fifth, in the other part, Brazencourt." This was a similarly short part, but one containing some good lines, through which Macklin may perhaps have gained applause. From this time, however, we hear nothing more of Macklin on the London stage until 1733, which seems to show that his share in the success of *The Coffee House Politician* cannot have been as great as he afterwards imagined.

The fact is, Macklin was not a man to attract the ordinary manager. He was eminently a reformer, and the average stage-manager is, and always has been, a red-tape Tory of a pronounced type. Already Macklin had attempted, in the provinces, something more akin to nature than the style of acting that was current in his early days, and Rich, the London manager, had given him little encouragement. "I spoke so *familiar*, sir," says Macklin, in remembering those days, "and so little in the *hoity-toity* tone of the Tragedy of that day, that the manager told me I had better go to grass for another year or two." So he strolled away to his old haunts of Bristol and South Wales, until a theatrical revolution recalled him to London in 1733.

During his apprenticeship in the provinces he seems

to have taken considerable pains with his education. There is little doubt that he took great trouble to get rid of his natural *brogue*, and, this great step to English favour accomplished, he turned his serious attention to the practice of elocution. No man has ever been more respected for his good judgment in all technical matters of staging and elocution, and it is very probable, as Kirkman says, that, observing the deficiency of English actors in these matters, he, early in his career, gave them his most earnest consideration.

It was probably during these years, too, that Macklin assumed the name by which he is always known. His family name of M'Laughlin was obtrusively Irish, and as the Irish were unpopular in England at that time, he found it advisable to assume the name Macklin. Some of the early playbills, 1733–35, spell his name Mecklin, or Mechlin ; but the name M'Laughlin appears to have been wholly abandoned before his arrival in London in 1733.

At some time in his early career—Cooke places it at about the age of forty—he became a convert to Protestantism, and it is from the statement of the fact of his conversion, rather than from any more satisfactory evidence, that we gather that he was once a Roman Catholic. His father was a Presbyterian, and his mother a Catholic, and there is a suggestion that he received some education at an early age from his uncle, who was a Catholic priest. It is said that he grew up in his mother's religion, and continued in the same until the following accident converted him from a Catholic, careless of the ceremonies and injunctions of his faith, to a Protestant as keen and militant as any in the north of Ireland. He was strolling one day in Lincoln's Inn Fields, when he saw on a bookstall a little book entitled "The Funeral of the Mass."

This he bought for the small sum of ninepence, and, says Cooke, "took it home with him and read it two or three times over very attentively; the consequence of which was, that he deserted his mother Church, and became a convert to the Protestant religion." After which he used to boast that he was a Protestant "as staunch as the Archbishop of Canterbury, and on as pure principles." From this we may gather that the orthodoxy of "The Funeral of the Mass" was convincing and without reproach.

The date of Macklin's marriage, like all the rest of the early Macklin chronology, is involved in obscurity, but it seems to me that Kirkman is probably right in his suggestion, that it was a year or two prior to his arrival in London in 1733. Cooke, however, says it was probably between 1734 and 1736. Kirkman tells us that the lady was a Mrs. Ann Grace, the widow of a very respectable hosier in Dublin. Cooke, on the other hand, says her maiden name was Grace Purvor, that she was the friend of Mrs. Booth, and that at the time Macklin was paying his court to her, he came into jealous contact with His Grace John, Duke of Argyle, who had been powerfully attracted by her beauty. However this may be, Macklin found a thoroughly praiseworthy helpmate in his wife, and the theatre gained an actress of considerable merit. The Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet;* Lady Wronghead, Lady Wrangle, Lappet, in *The Miser;* and, above all, the Hostess in *Henry V.;*—these were parts in which, for a considerable number of years, Mrs. Macklin was, in the public estimation, almost without a rival.

After their marriage in Dublin, if we take Kirkman's account of the matter, they went to Chester, Bristol, and Wales, and ultimately settled for a time in Portsmouth. Here Miss Macklin was born, a lady whose abilities we

must discuss hereafter; and it was from this place that Macklin was sent for to recruit the forces of Drury Lane.

This year, 1733, saw the death of the great Booth, whose acting Macklin had had an opportunity of admiring in his early visits to London. Macklin used to speak with great delight of his performance of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and notes that Booth used "cloth shoes (soles and all), that the sound of his step should not be heard on the stage." Mrs. Oldfield, immortal in tragedy and comedy, had died in 1730, but Macklin was present, in 1728, at her first representation of Lady Townly. Wilks, Norris, and Boheme he had known, and Colley Cibber, who retired in 1732. Quin and Theophilus Cibber were soon to know him as a rival, and it was in a measure through the instrumentality of Cibber that Macklin secured firm standing-ground upon the London stage.

It appears that a man named Highmore, who had once had the misfortune to make a hit as Lothario in *The Fair Penitent*, and who was manager of Drury Lane at this period, had had a quarrel with Theophilus Cibber, which had ended in a revolt of the players to the Haymarket, headed by young Cibber. Highmore was shamefully treated in this transaction. He had bought from Colley Cibber his third of the patent at an exorbitant sum (£3150), and now young Cibber, with all the actors and actresses, except Bridgewater, Mrs. Horton, and Mrs. Clive, opened the Haymarket in opposition to him. However, this action on Cibber's part was useful to Macklin, who, with his wife, joined the company at Drury Lane under very favourable circumstances. He made his first appearance on October 31, as Captain Brazen in *The Recruiting Officer*, and, during the five months which elapsed before the return of the seceders, he played several leading comedy parts, such as Marplot

in *The Busybody*, Clodio in *Love makes a Man*, Teague in *The Committee*, and Brass in *The Confederacy*. Thus by the time that Highmore, impoverished and weary of the struggle, had sold his share of the patent to Charles Fleetwood, Macklin's position as an actor was established. On Fleetwood's advent to power, Cibber and the seceders returned to Drury Lane, reappearing on March 12, 1734.

Macklin was, for the moment, ousted from Drury Lane by the return of the seceders, and joined a company with which Fielding opened the Haymarket in the spring of 1734. Here he is known, in April of that year, to have played Squire Badger, a rudimentary Squire Western, in Fielding's *Don Quixote in England*. At the beginning of the season 1734–35, however, he returned to Drury Lane, and devoted himself to the affairs of that theatre, soon becoming a firm favourite with the manager.

Fleetwood was at first disposed to rely on the judgment of Cibber, but discovered this revolutionary to be by no means a safe adviser, and therefore displaced him, says Victor, "for Macklin, a man at that time of seemingly humble pretensions, but of capabilities sufficient to raise him to the office of lord high cardinal. This minister continued long in the highest favour with the manager, and the business of the theatre was conducted for some years, under his influence and direction, with very considerable success." Thus, from an unknown stroller Macklin was now raised to the position of confidential adviser to the manager of Drury Lane.

Fleetwood and Macklin seem to have devoted such of their time as could be spared from the toils of theatrical management to gaming, and they were both constant visitors to White's gambling-house, where they lost large sums of money. Fleetwood had inherited a patrimony of £6000, which he managed to squander

very readily, and he then proceeded to borrow from his friends, not sparing his humble henchman Macklin. Fleetwood seems to have had the person, address, and manners of an accomplished borrower; and in "one of those irresistible hours of solicitation," Macklin is said to have become his bondsman for no less a sum than £3000. From this bond he escaped by a clever ruse. He somewhat meanly allowed the good-natured poet, Paul Whitehead, to take his place, the result being that when Fleetwood found his embarrassments too many for him and fled the country, Whitehead was forced to spend several years in prison. Macklin seems to have regretted this unavoidable misfortune of Whitehead. "But, sir," said he, in telling the story, "every man will save himself from ruin if he can, and I was glad of any opportunity to accomplish it."

Meanwhile from 1734 to 1735 several pieces were produced, among which were Lillo's *Christian Hero*, Fielding's *Universal Gallant*, and a revival of Colley Cibber's amusing comedy, *Love makes a Man; or, the Fop's Fortune*, which was the chief success of the season. Quin now left Rich to come to Drury Lane, and although Macklin was in no sense his rival, he was already becoming a popular favourite.

We have spoken of Macklin's wild, impetuous disposition, and a painful instance of the effects of his uncontrollable temper is chronicled in the criminal records of this year. On May 10, 1735, he had the misfortune to kill Thomas Hallam, a fellow-actor, in the scene-room at Drury Lane Theatre. Both actors were playing in a farce entitled *Trick for Trick*, when they quarrelled about the possession of a wig. Hallam gave up the wig to Macklin, but continued to grumble at him; Macklin, in a passion, thrust a stick he was holding

through his eye, and the unfortunate Hallam died within twenty-four hours. Macklin was advised by his friends to keep out of the way, but, acting upon wiser and more honourable counsel, he wrote a letter to the manager of Drury Lane, expressing his deep sorrow, and his intention to surrender himself at the Old Bailey. There he was tried for the murder of Thomas Hallam, and as the depositions of the witnesses give a wonderful insight into the life and manners of the scene-room, I cannot do better than give one of these at length, choosing the evidence of Thomas Arne, which is the story of an eye-witness of the whole scene.

"I have the honour to be the numberer of the boxes of Drury Lane playhouse, under Mr. Fleetwood. On Saturday night I delivered my accounts in at the property office; and then, at eight at night, I came into the scene-room, where the players warm themselves, and sat in a chair at the side of the fire. Fronting the fire there is a long seat, where five or six may sit. The play was almost done, and they were making preparations for the entertainment, when the prisoner came into the scene-room and sat down next me, and high words arose between him and the deceased about a stock wig for a disguise in the entertainment. The prisoner had played in the wig the night before, and now the deceased had got it. 'D——n you for a rogue,' says the prisoner; 'what business have you with my wig?' 'I am no more a rogue than yourself,' says the deceased. 'It's a stock wig, and I have as much right to it as you have.' Some of the players coming in, they desired the deceased to fetch the wig and give it to the prisoner, which he did, and then said to him, 'Here is your wig. I have got one I like better.' The prisoner, sitting by me, took the wig, and began to comb it out, and all seemed to be quiet for about half a quarter of an hour; but the prisoner began to grumble again, and said to the deceased, 'G——d d——n you for a blackguard, scrub, rascal, how durst you have the impudence to take this wig?'

The deceased answered, 'I am no more a rascal than yourself.' Upon which the prisoner started up out of his chair, and, with a stick in his hand, made a lunge at the deceased, and thrust the stick into his left eye, and, pulling it back again, looked pale, turned on his heel, and, in a passion, threw the stick into the fire. 'G——d d——n it!' says he; and, turning about again on his heel, he sat down. The deceased clapped his hand to his eye, and said it was gone through his head. He was going to sink, but they set him in a chair. The prisoner came to him, and, leaning upon his left arm, put his hand to his eye. 'Lord!' cried the deceased, 'it is out.' 'No,' says the prisoner; 'I feel the ball roll under my hand.' Young Mr. Cibber came in, and immediately sent for Mr. Coldham, the surgeon."

Other witnesses were called, who gave substantially the same account of the matter. Among them, Mr. Coldham, the surgeon, who admitted that "the prisoner shewed much concern, and desired me to take all possible care of the deceased." Macklin, who, as a man on his trial, had no right in those days to be represented by counsel, conducted his own defence, cross-examining the various witnesses to show the necessity of the wig for his own part, and the insulting and aggravating demeanour of the deceased. At the close of the case for the prosecution, Mr. Macklin addressed the court as follows:—

"My lord, and gentlemen of the jury,—I played Sancho the night before, and the wig I then used was proper for the new farce, and *absolutely necessary* for my part, as the *whole force* of the *poet's wit* depends on the *lean, meagre looks* of one that is in want of food. This wig being, therefore, so fit for my purpose, and hearing that the deceased had got it, I said to him, '*You have got the wig that I played in last night, and it fits my part this night.*' '*I have as much right to it as you,*' says he. I told him that I *desired* it as a favour. He said I should not have it. 'You are a scoundrel,' says I, 'to deny me when I only ask you that *as a favour which is*

my right.' 'I am no more a scoundrel than yourself,' says he; and so he went out of the room, and I went to the prompter's door to look for *Mr. Cibber*. Meanwhile the deceased went into the scene-room, and said I had used him like a pickpocket. The author persuaded him to let me have the wig, and the property-man brought him another wig. Upon this, he threw the first wig at me. I asked why he could not have done that before. He answered, 'Because you used me like a pickpocket.' This provoked me, and, rising up, I said, 'D——n you for a puppy! get out.' His left side was then towards me; but he turned about, unluckily, and my stick went into his eye. 'Good God!' said I, 'what have I done?' and I threw the stick into the chimney.

* * * * *

"I begged of the persons who were present to take the deceased to the bagnio; but *Mrs. Moor* said that she had a room where he should be taken care of. I had then no idea that it would prove his end, but feared that his eye was in danger. But the next morning I saw *Mr. Turbutt*, who advised me to keep out of the way, or I should be sent to gaol. I begged of him to get the advice of a physician, and gave him a guinea, which was all the money I had about me. From the beginning of the quarrel to the end it was but ten minutes, and there was no intermission."

After this speech, the prisoner called Richard Turbutt, one of the players, and an eye-witness of the scuffle, who gave a very similar account of the matter to that sworn to by Thomas Arne. He then called Mr. Rich, Mr. Fleetwood, Mr. Quin, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Mills, and several others, to depose that he was a man of quiet and peaceable disposition, and the case was then left to the jury.

At this time there was no such certainty on the subject of manslaughter and murder as there is to-day, though there was a great deal of learned writing in relation to killing *per infortunium* or *se defendendo*. In Hale's time, it was necessary for a jury to find the facts specially, if

they acquitted a man on either of these grounds. "Such a finding," says Mr. Justice Stephen, "still involved forfeiture, besides which the court might give judgment upon it that the prisoner was guilty of manslaughter." Sir Michael Foster, who published his discourses in 1762, says that the practice of forfeiture did not in fact exist for a long period of time, and intimates that special verdicts had fallen into disuse, and that judges had "taken general verdicts of acquittal in plain cases of death *per infortunium.*" Manslaughter was at this time a felony, punishable with burning in the hand, and imprisonment for not exceeding a year.

These few legal facts are worth calling to mind, because of the somewhat extraordinary result of Macklin's trial. "The jury," says Kirkman, "found the prisoner guilty of manslaughter," and, as we find no record of his undergoing any punishment whatever, the court probably took a lenient view of the matter, and imposed no sentence upon the prisoner, or perhaps he was burned in the hand and discharged. Of this, however, there is no record; all we know is that he was acquitted of the grave charge of murder, and was soon afterwards received at Drury Lane with affectionate applause, when he reappeared as Ramilie in Fielding's *Miser.*

CHAPTER III.

JAMES QUIN (1693–1766).

QUIN was the immediate predecessor of Macklin, and the last of that old school of actors which Macklin did so much to abolish. Some slight sketch of his career as a man, and his methods as an actor, will throw light on Macklin's difficulties, and exhibit more clearly the reforms Macklin made in elocution and stage management, by showing what was the accepted standard of perfection, which he helped to alter and replace by better things.

It is to be regretted that no one has seen fit to compile a good biography of James Quin. A volume, published in 1766, reported by some to have been written by Goldsmith, is wholly unworthy of reference, and so dull and defective in picturesque qualities, that we may safely acquit the poet of having had any hand in its compilation. From what I can gather from various sources, not without fear, however, of further consolidating errors, the following is set down as an accepted outline of his life.

James Quin was the descendant of an Irish family of good position. His grandfather, Mark Quin, was Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1676, and his father, after receiving his education at Trinity College, Dublin, removed to London, where he was called to the bar by the Honour-

able Society of Lincoln's Inn. James Quin is often spoken of as an Irishman by birth, but the better opinion seems to be that he was born in King Street, Covent Garden, on February 24, 1693, and that shortly afterwards, on his grandfather's death, he was taken to Ireland by his father, who then came into possession of a very considerable fortune. In Dublin young Quin was educated by Dr. Jones, a teacher celebrated for his learning, and, being destined by his father for the bar, remained under his tuition until 1710, when his father died. Whether he now came over to England and squandered his fortune in gaiety and dissipation, or whether, on the other hand, his legitimacy was challenged and his patrimony wasted in a Chancery suit, it is difficult to say. The probability is that his mother had two husbands at once, and that, in consequence, James Quin was illegitimate, and his father's heirs, knowing this, asserted their legal claims to what should have been young Quin's estate. Different authorities give different accounts of the matter; what is certain is that from some cause or other he lost his fortune, and was turned adrift upon the world at an early age, a well-educated adventurer. At this time he is described as having "an expressive countenance, an inquisitive eye, a clear voice full and melodious, an extensive memory, a majestic figure, and, above all, an enthusiastic admiration of Shakespeare." It is said that the study of Shakespeare's plays had, with Quin, been pursued in Temple Chambers, when he should have been poring over the crabbed folios of Coke upon Littleton; but, however this may be, his tastes were formed, his talent was undeniable, and his opportunity soon presented itself. His first appearance upon any stage was made at the old Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, in the part of Abel in the *Committee.*

W. R. Chetwood, for twenty years the prompter at Drury Lane, tells us this in his "History of the Stage," with the following further details of his early career. He played, in his first season, Cleon in Shadwell's adaptation of *Timon of Athens*, and the Prince of Tanais in Rowe's *Tamerlane*. Chetwood saw and admired his genius, and at his suggestion Quin moved up to London, where it is said he was introduced by Ryan to the managers of Drury Lane. His first recorded appearance in London is as Vultur in Charles Johnson's *Country Lasses*, February 4, 1715. Progress in this day was very much a matter of seniority, but Quin, by what was for him a lucky accident, received very rapid promotion. On November 5, 1716, a grand revival of *Tamerlane* took place, in which Quin was cast for the small part of the Dervise. On the third night of its run, Mills, the Bajazet, was taken ill, and Quin was allowed to read the part. Probably not one of the older actors saw what an opportunity this was for Quin, who was then in the condition of a "faggot," as novice performers were called, and had in all probability never before had a chance of doing more than speak a few unimportant lines. His reading of the part was received with the greatest applause. Before the next night he made himself perfect in the words, and his accidental triumph was ratified by large and enthusiastic audiences. The company, however, was at this time too strong in leading actors, and there was no room for Quin, who transferred his allegiance to John Rich, and almost at once undertook leading parts.

His first appearance at Lincoln's Inn Fields was on January 7, 1718, as Hotspur, and he remained with Rich from this date until 1734. In 1720, it was proposed that the company should revive *The Merry Wives of*

Windsor, but there was no actor who would attempt the part of Falstaff. Rich was inclined to give up the revival for want of a Falstaff, when Quin offered to undertake the part. John Rich demurred to this, at first, very strongly. "You attempt Falstaff!" he exclaimed, interjecting his remarks with expressive pinches of snuff; "why, you might as well think of acting Cato after Booth! The character of Falstaff, young man, is quite another character from what you think; it is not a little snivelling part that—that—in short, any one can do." However, Quin over-persuaded the manager, much to his own advantage, for the piece was revived, and, thanks to Quin's Falstaff, drew crowded houses during no less than eighteen nights of the season 1720–21. Davies tells us that—

"The great applause that Quin gained in this the feeblest portrait of Falstaff, encouraged him to venture on the more high-seasoned part of the character in the *First Part of Henry IV.* Of this large compound of his, bragging and exhaustless fund of wit and humour, Quin possessed the ostensible or mechanical part in an eminent degree. In person he was tall and bulky; his voice strong and pleasing; his countenance manly, and his eyes piercing and expressive. In scenes where satire and sarcasm were poignant, he greatly excelled; particularly in the witty triumph over Bardolph's carbuncles and the fooleries of the hostess. His supercilious brow, in spite of assumed gaiety, sometimes unmasked the surliness of his disposition; however, he was, notwithstanding some faults, esteemed the most intelligent and judicious Falstaff since the days of Betterton."

As long as Booth lived, it was impossible for Quin to claim the first position on the English stage, but he led the forces with which Rich carried on the struggle at Lincoln's Inn Fields against the more powerful and popular company at Drury Lane. Booth retired in 1728,

and during the ensuing thirteen years, until Garrick's *début* in 1741, Quin was the leading actor of the day.

When Rich moved to Covent Garden in 1732, Quin opened the new theatre by his performance of Fainall in Congreve's *Way of the World.* Here, on January 18, 1734, he challenged the memories of the old playgoers by performing Cato—an experiment highly dangerous, one would think, seeing in what estimation the veteran Booth had been held in this character during his lifetime. Quin had the wisdom, as well as the good taste, to announce that "the part of Cato would only be *attempted* by Mr. Quin;" and doubtless the audience, flattered by this tribute to the memory of Booth, were inclined to view the attempt graciously. His success was marked; and when he declaimed the line—

"Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty!"

there was a universal shout of, "Booth outdone!" And, it is said, the audience were so excited, that they went the length of encoring the famous soliloquy. From that moment the part of Cato belonged to Quin as it had formerly belonged to Booth, and it became one of his most favourite representations.

When Fleetwood became patentee of Drury Lane, in 1734, he offered Quin the enormous salary—as it was then considered—of £500 a year. Quin was at that time receiving only £300 from Rich, and offered him his services at the higher figure, but the manager replied that no actor was worth more them £300 a year. So Rich and Quin parted company, and Quin went across to Drury Lane, where he appeared as Othello on September 10, 1734. Here he continued until the end of the season 1740–41, when he went to Ireland for two seasons. It was at Drury Lane that he first met Macklin,

who soon became a somewhat formidable rival. When he returned to England in 1742, his supremacy was no longer acknowledged. Macklin had already appeared in Shylock, and Garrick had made his *début*. The rivalry of Garrick and Quin, and their joint performance in 1746, are matters that cannot here be dealt with at length. Suffice it that Quin recognized the superiority of Garrick, or, perhaps we should say, his greater popularity, and withdrew to Bath. During the next year, when Garrick was patentee of Drury Lane, Quin was desirous once more of playing against him, and, thinking that Rich would jump at the suggestion, wrote as follows :—

"DEAR RICH,
"I am at Bath.
"Yours,
"JAMES QUIN."

To which Rich replied—

"DEAR QUIN,
"Stay there and be damned.
"Yours,
"JOHN RICH."

In 1748, however, Quin returned to Covent Garden, where he played for three seasons, receiving in 1750–51 a salary of £1000 a year, the largest amount ever known to have been paid up to this time. Here he struggled against Garrick, who, once at least, made him offers to come over to Drury Lane, although he can never at this time have been a very serious rival. At length, recognizing that without doubt his day was over, Quin withdrew from the contest without any ceremonious farewell to the stage, playing for the last time as a

salaried actor the part of Horatio in *The Fair Penitent*, on May 15, 1751.

During Fleetwood's management Macklin and Quin had many bitter quarrels, which were crystallized in epigram and anecdote, of which the following is a specimen :—

"'Your servant, sir,' says surly Quin.
'Sir, I am yours,' replies Macklin.
'Why, you're the very Jew you play,
Your face performed the task well.'
'And you are Sir John Brute, they say,
And an accomplished Maskwell.'
Says Rich, who heard the sneering elves,
And knew their horrid hearts,
'Acting too much your very selves,
You over do your parts.'"

The epigrammatist hit them off not kindly, but well. They were both rough and surly, self-opinionated and sarcastical. Quin loved good living and the aristocracy; Macklin pretended to literary tastes. They were contemporaries and rivals, hating each other not a little, and, I dare say, exhibiting some of the qualities of their favourite parts when they spoke of each other to strangers.

Quin, with his sharp tongue, had given Macklin plenty of cause for offence. When he was playing Antonio to Macklin's Shylock, he had said of his brother actor, "If God Almighty writes a legible hand, that man must be a villain." And when some one observed that Macklin might make a good actor, having such *strong lines* in his face, Quin replied, "Lines, sir! I see nothing in the fellow's face but a d—n'd deal of cordage!" Then there was the *bon mot* when Macklin accepted the part of Pandulph, the Pope's legate, in a revival of *King John*, that

he was "a cardinal who had originally been a parish clerk;" and I dare say a hundred other good things that Quin said of Macklin, which the latter's friends had repeated to him, and which he had treasured up in his mind, swearing never to take the fellow's hand in friendship as long as he lived.

The original quarrel, however, took place early in Macklin's career, probably about 1738, and is best told in his own language as he used to recall it in old age to his broken memory. Sitting in the Rainbow Coffee House in King Street, Covent Garden, in the year 1787, some one asked old Macklin if he and Quin had ever quarrelled. Very possibly the questioner had heard the old gentleman tell the story before, and asked the question for the benefit of the bystanders, who quickly crowded round to listen to the story, and help the old man's failing memory when he paused in his narrative.

"Yes, sir; I was very low in the theatre, as an actor, when the surly fellow was the despot of the place. But, sir, I had —had a lift, sir. Yes, I was to play—the—the—the boy with the red breeches. You know who I mean, sir—he whose mother is always going to law; you know who I mean!"

"Jerry Blackacre, I suppose, sir?"

"Ay, sir, Jerry. Well, sir, I began to be a little known to the public, and, egad! I began to make them laugh. I was called the *Wild Irishman*, sir, and was thought to have some fun in me; and I made them laugh heartily in the boy, sir—in Jerry.

"When I came off the stage, the surly fellow who played the scolding Captain in the play, Captain—Captain—— You know who I mean."

"Manly, I believe, sir?"

"Ay, sir, the same—Manly. Well, sir, the surly fellow began to scold me; told me I was at my *damned tricks*, and that there was no having a chaste scene for me. Everybody, nay, egad! the manager himself, was afraid of him. I was

afraid of the fellow, too; but not much. Well, sir, I told him that I did not mean to disturb *him* by my acting, *but to show off a little myself.* Well, sir, in the other scenes I did the same, and made the audience laugh incontinently, and he scolded me again, sir. I made the same apology; but the surly fellow would not be appeased. Again, sir, however, I did the same; and when I returned to the greenroom, he abused me like a pickpocket, and said I must leave off my *damned tricks.* I told him I could not play otherwise. He said, I *could*, and I *should.* Upon which, sir, egad! I said to him flatly, 'You lie!' He was chewing an apple at this moment; and, spitting the contents into his hand, he threw them in my face."

"Indeed!"

"It is a fact, sir! Well, sir, I went up to him directly (for I was a great *boxing cull* in those days), and pushed him down into a chair and pummelled his face damnably."

"You did right, sir."

"He strove to resist, but he was no match for me; and I made his face swell so with the blows, that he could hardly speak. When he attempted to go on with his part, sir, he mumbled so, that the audience began to hiss. Upon which he went forward and told them, sir, that something very unpleasant had happened, and that he was really very ill. But, sir, the moment I went to strike him, there were many noblemen in the greenroom, full dressed, with their swords and large wigs (for the greenroom was a sort of stateroom then, sir). Well, they were all alarmed, and jumped upon the benches, waiting in silent amazement till the affair was over.

"At the end of the play, sir, he told me I must give him satisfaction; and that, when he changed his dress, he would wait for me at the Obelisk in Covent Garden. I told him I would be with him, but, sir, when he was gone, I recollected that I was to play in the pantomime (for I was a great pantomime boy in those days). So, sir, I said to myself, 'Damn the fellow, let him wait; I won't go to him till my business is all over. Let him fume and fret, and be damned.' Well, sir, Mr. Fleetwood, the manager, who was one of the

best men in the world—all kindness, all mildness, and graciousness and affability—had heard of the affair, and, as Quin was his great actor, and in favour with the town, he told me I had had revenge enough; that I should not meet the surly fellow that night, but that he would make the matter up somehow or other.

"Well, sir, Mr. Fleetwood ordered me a good supper and some wine, and made me sleep at his house all night, to prevent any meeting. Well, sir, in the morning he told me that I must, *for his sake*, make a little apology to Quin for what I had done. And so, sir, having given him a bellyful, I, to oblige Mr. Fleetwood (for I loved the man), did, sir, make some apology to him, and the matter dropped."

This story, with all its extravagance, undoubtedly represents a serious quarrel between Quin and Macklin, which, with its attendant insults on both sides, would long embitter one against the other; but it is pleasant to believe that the two were ultimately reconciled. There had for many years been an avoidance of all unnecessary intercourse between them. When they met at rehearsal, it was "Mr. Quin," "Mr. Macklin;" and they treated each other with the studied courtesy of strangers. It is said that this was broken through when they were both attending the funeral of a brother player, and, after the interment, met again at a tavern in Covent Garden. Neither man was an early riser from the supper-table, and six a.m. came to find the rest of the company gone, and the two actors alone sitting at the table with the bottle between them. Quin broke ground and drank Macklin's health, and Macklin returned it. After a pause, Quin said to his companion, "There has been a foolish quarrel between you and me, sir, which, though accommodated, I must confess, I have not been able entirely to forget till now. The melancholy occasion of our meeting, and the circumstance of our being left together,

I thank God, have made me see my error. If you can, therefore, forget it, give me your hand, and let us live together in future like brother performers." This was a long speech for Quin at this hour in the morning, and Macklin was ready at the conclusion with outstretched hand. There was a reconciliation, and another bottle, and the curtain falls on Macklin trying to carry Quin upon his shoulders to his lodgings in the Piazzas in Covent Garden.

The two men were naturally and professionally antagonistic. Quin, as an actor, was the last of the orthodox conventional school; while Macklin, in all his parts, and especially in his Shylock, made some steps towards natural acting. He was, as it were, the connecting link between Quin and Garrick, the first and greatest of natural actors. Quin was an exponent of the grandiloquent or artificial style, exhibiting the form rather than the soul of tragedy. He was successful in the more solid characters, such as Coriolanus and Cato, but not in emotional and complicated parts, such as Lear, Richard, and Macbeth. Cumberland, in his memoirs, gives us a capital picture of Quin in tragedy, who "presented himself, upon the rising of the curtain, in a green velvet coat embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottom periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled square-toed shoes. With very little variation of cadence, and in a deep full tone, accompanied by a sawing kind of action, which had more of the senate than of the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics with an air of dignified indifference that seemed to disdain the plaudits that were bestowed upon him." His great parts in tragedy were Cato, Brutus, Pyrrhus in the *Distressed Mother*, Pierre in *Venice Preserved*, Horatio in *The Fair Penitent* Ventidius, Rowe's Tamerlane, and Bajazet. Davies

agrees with other critics that, although he was "a very natural reciter of plain and familiar dialogue, he was utterly unqualified for the striking and vigorous characters of tragedy; could neither express the tender nor violent emotions of the heart; his action was generally forced or languid, and his movement ponderous and sluggish. But it must be confessed that he often gave true weight and dignity to sentiment, by a well-regulated tone of voice, judicious elocution, and easy deportment." Earl Conyngham, in speaking of the quarrels between Brutus and Cassius, when Quin and Garrick were playing together, used the following expressive simile: "Quin resembled a solid three-decker, lying quiet and scorning to fire, but with the evident power, if put forth, of sending its antagonist to the bottom; Garrick, a frigate turning round it, attempting to grapple, and every moment threatening an explosion that would destroy both." Smollett gives an excellent account of the same scene from his own modern point of view in "Peregrine Pickle," putting his criticism into the mouth of the Knight of Malta, whom Peregrine meets in Paris:

"Yet one of your *graciosos*," says the Knight, referring to Quin, "I cannot admire in all the characters he assumes. His utterance is a continual sing-song, like the chanting of vespers; and his action resembles that of heaving ballast into the hold of a ship. In his outward deportment, he seems to have confounded the ideas of dignity and insolence of mien; acts the crafty, cool, designing Crookback, as a loud, shallow, blustering Hector; and in the character of the mild patriot Brutus, loses all temper and decorum; nay, so ridiculous is the behaviour of him and Cassius at their interview, that, setting foot to foot and grinning at each other, with the aspect of two cobblers enraged, they thrust their left sides together with repeated shocks, that the hilts of their swords may clash for the entertainment of the audience; as if they

were a couple of merry-andrews, endeavouring to raise the laugh of the vulgar, on some scaffold at Bartholomew Fair. The despair of a great man, who falls a sacrifice to the infernal practices of a subtle traitor that enjoyed his confidence, this English Æsopus represents by beating his own forehead, and bellowing like a bull; and, indeed, in almost all his most interesting scenes, performs such strange shakings of the head, and other antic gesticulations, that when I first saw him act, I imagined the poor man laboured under that paralytical disorder, which is known by the name of St. Vitus's dance. In short, he seems to be a stranger to the more refined sensations of the soul, consequently his expression is of the vulgar kind, and he must often sink under the idea of the poet; so that he has recourse to such violence of affected agitation as imposes upon the undiscerning spectator; but to the eye of taste, evinces him a mere player of that class whom your admired Shakespeare justly compares to nature's journeyman tearing a passion to rags. Yet this man, in spite of all these absurdities, is an admirable Falstaff, exhibits the character of the eighth Henry to the life, is reasonably applauded in the Plain Dealer, excels in the part of Sir John Brute, and would be equal to many humorous situations in low comedy, which his pride will not allow him to undertake. I should not have been so severe upon this actor, had I not seen him extolled by his partisans with the most ridiculous and fulsome manifestation of praise, even in those very circumstances wherein, as I have observed, he chiefly failed."

Peregrine himself roasts poor Quin in grand style in a later passage, giving in ludicrous detail an account of his performance of Zanga; but this is less worthy of quotation as a critical estimate of the actor, as it is purposely written in the extravagant language that Smollett so often puts into the mouth of his lively young hero.

Quin's excellence in Falstaff and other comic characters was undenied. He had a great command of facial expression, was happy in his stage business, keeping it,

however, well within bounds, and never descending to grimace and buffoonery. Davies speaks especially of the "impudent dignity" of his Falstaff, which suggests that he was successful in the essential characteristics of the part. He had a great contempt, however, for the extraneous aids of make-up and costume, and is reported to have played young Bevil, in Steele's *Conscious Lovers*, in the same suit in which he acted the Old Bachelor. One of his favourite characters, after Falstaff, was Sir John Brute in *The Provoked Wife*; but Davies does not speak of his performance of this part in terms of unqualified praise. He "seemed to have forgotten," says Davies, "that Sir John Brute had ever been a gentleman, of which part of the character Cibber and Garrick retained the remembrance through every scene of riot and debauchery. Quin, besides, in this part, wanted variety, and that glow and warmth in colouring the extravagance of this merry rake, without which the picture remains imperfect and unfinished." At the same time, Horace Walpole, no mean critic, preferred his performance of this character to that of Garrick. Among his other important characters were Henry VIII., Jacques—in which his admirable elocution and somewhat monotonous manner must have stood him in good stead—Thersites, Apemantus, Volpone, Manly, Heartwell, Maskwell, and Old Knowell in *Every Man in his Humour*. In his time he played a wide range of characters, was undoubtedly a great comedian, and a successful tragedian of the conventional school.

I confess that I cannot in any way share the belief that Quin was, in character, a harsh, unkindly man. True, his jokes were often coarse and brutal enough, but he was a licensed wit, and doubtless thought more about the force and point of his jest than about its humanity.

But it is absurd to suppose that he was in any way a surly man. He was handsome, popular, witty, "beloved by his friends, and always on joyous terms with himself. Few understood the inclinations of men better, and none could be more indulgent to unpremeditated error. While he cherished a little affectation in himself, to conceal the warmth and mildness of his disposition, he discerned every degree of it in others with a shrewd eye. I think he was an accomplished specimen of a man of the world of the right sort, for he was more amiable than he really seemed to be." This is the estimate of a warm admirer, but one who seems to have been a sound judge of his character. Perhaps the broils and quarrels in which he was engaged may have given him a bad name among his contemporaries, though it is hard to say how far he was to blame in some of these adventures. On two occasions he had the misfortune to kill a brother actor. In 1718, he caused the death of William Bowen in a kind of duel. It is said that Bowen, who was very jealous of his reputation, was driven to fury by Quin's assertion that some other actor played Jacomo in *The Libertine* better than Bowen did. Enraged at this, he got Quin into a room in a tavern alone, set his back against the door, and insisted on satisfaction for the insult. He then assailed Quin with such blind fury that he ran upon his sword and was killed—generously, with his dying words, acquitting Quin of all blame in the matter. The coroner's inquest found *se defendendo*, but the Old Bailey jury returned a verdict of manslaughter, and it is said Quin was burnt in the hand. This was the statutory punishment for manslaughter, which was not abolished until 19 Geo. III. c. 74. A T was burnt with a hot iron in the brawn of the thumb of the left hand. This was often done by the executioner,

in open court, before the prisoner was discharged. The sentence, in Quin's case, was at least nominally executed; but, perhaps, as was not infrequent with favoured offenders, a cold iron was used. On another occasion he was perhaps more to blame. He was playing Cato at Drury Lane, and a Welshman named Williams was cast for the part of the Messenger. This man pronounced Cato *Keeto*, and when he gave the line "Cæsar sends health to Keeto," Quin somewhat brutally retorted on the public stage and with tragic accent, "Would he had sent a better messenger." Poor Williams was greatly affronted by this indignity, and followed Quin into the greenroom, demanding satisfaction. Quin, with his usual nonchalance, tried to laugh the matter off as a good jest, but only succeeded in making the Welshman still more furious. In the end Williams waited for him under the piazza, where he drew his sword and insisted on fighting Quin, who, in the scuffle that ensued, for a second time killed one of his fellow-actors. Again he was tried, and this time seems to have been wholly acquitted.

These stories may perhaps have raised a prejudice against his good nature that ought not to exist. No one, with his extravagance of humour, could help making enemies, and, in that age, being brought into quarrels more or less disreputable. But I cannot set these down as outweighing the many well-known but less picturesque acts of kindness with which he is credited. His affection for and generosity to Thomson the poet, who has immortalized his benefactor in the *Castle of Indolence*, where he hails him as "the Æsopus of the age;" his fatherly kindness to Miss Bellamy, when, a mere girl, she first appeared upon the Covent Garden stage; these, and many other pleasant traits in his character, deserve

consideration as well as its rougher and less pleasing characteristics.

Even his love of good eating and drinking is not an unpleasing feature of the man, and has certainly given us some of his best sayings. It is said that he thought angling a very barbarous diversion; for, said he, "suppose some superior being should bait a hook with venison and go a *Quinning*, I should certainly bite, and what a sight I should be, dangling in the air!" Every one knows his plaintive wish as he passed beneath Westminster Bridge, "Oh that my mouth were that centre arch, and that the river ran claret!" So keen was he about certain kinds of food, that he is reported to have visited Plymouth on several occasions, merely for the purpose of eating John Dories. He was once staying at an inn in Plymouth which happened to be much infested with rats. "My drains," said the landlord, "run down to the quay, and the scents of the kitchen attract the rats." "That's a pity," said Quin. "At some leisure moment before I return to town, remind me of the circumstance, and perhaps I may be able to suggest a remedy." In the mean time he lived expensively, and at the end of eight weeks he called for his bill. "What!" said he, "one hundred and fifty pounds for eight weeks in one of the cheapest towns in England!" However, he paid the bill, and stepped into the chaise. "Oh, Mr. Quin," said the landlord, "I hope you have not forgot the remedy you promised me for the rats." "There's your bill," replied Quin; "show them that when they come, and if they trouble your house again, I'll be damned!" Garrick, who wrote epigrams on the foibles of all his friends and contemporaries, has a capital mock soliloquy of Quin, "On Seeing the Embalmed Body of Duke Humphrey at St. Albans':"

"O plague on Egypt's arts, I say!
Embalm the dead! On senseless clay
Rich wines and spices waste!
Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
Bound in a precious pickle, lie,
Which I can never taste!

"Let me embalm this flesh of mine
With turtle-fat, and Bordeaux wine,
And spoil the Egyptian trade!
Than Humphrey's Duke more happy I—
Embalmed alive, old Quin shall die,
A mummy ready made."

Quin's epicurean propensities were a great theme for Garrick's jokes. When Lord Halifax had sent Garrick a turkey, which his health did not permit him to enjoy, Garrick, in writing to thank him, told his lordship he would take it with him to Bath, saying, "When our old friend Quin was on one occasion ill and had received a present, I believe from the same bounteous hand that has sent me mine, his doctor told him that he would not be fit to touch such a thing for a fortnight. 'Shan't I?' says Quin; 'then, by G——d! it shall travel with me till I am fit.'"

Of his gallantry, too, there are many excellent stories. He may be credited with having said some of the prettiest things *to* women, and some of the coarsest things *of* them. When a lady asked him why there were more women in the world than men, he promptly replied, "It is in conformity with the arrangements of Nature, madam; we always see more of heaven than of earth." Again, when discussing the doctrine of Pythagoras with some lady of his acquaintance who was famed for the beauty of her neck, she put the question to him, "What creature's form would you hereafter prefer to inhabit?"

Quin was equal to the occasion when he answered softly, "A fly's, madam; then I might have the pleasure of sometimes resting on your ladyship's neck." But his jests were not all of this frivolous nature. Walpole, in writing to George Montagu on April 5, 1765, tells us of some of his best sayings, and we can only regret that Quin was not troubled with some Boswell-minded companion, who could have handed down to posterity all his witty sayings, wild, wise, and otherwise.

"Though I have little to say, it is worth while to write only to tell you two *bon-mots* of Quin, to that turncoat, hypocrite, infidel, Bishop Warburton. That saucy priest was haranguing at Bath in behalf of prerogative. Quin said, 'Pray, my lord, spare me; you are not acquainted with my principles. I am a republican; and perhaps I even think that the execution of Charles I. might be justified.' 'Ay,' said Warburton, 'by what law?' Quin replied, 'By all the laws he had left them.' The Bishop would have got off upon judgments, and bade the player remember that all the regicides came to violent ends; a lie, but no matter. 'I would not advise your lordship,' said Quin, 'to make use of that inference; for, if I am not mistaken, that was the case of the twelve apostles.' There was great wit *ad hominem* in the latter reply, but I think the former equal to anything I ever heard. It is the sum of the whole controversy couched in eight monosyllables, and comprehends at once the king's guilt and the justice of punishing it. The more one examines it the finer it proves. One can say nothing after it; so good-night!"

It was on a similar occasion, when Quin was dining with his great friends, that some dunder-headed peer, in the midst of the laughter, exclaimed, "What a pity it is, Quin my boy, that a clever fellow like you should be a player!" Quin flashed his eye, and replied, "What would your lordship have me to be—a lord?" The

actor was fond of fine company, but proud of his profession nevertheless.

After he had retired to Bath, he twice returned to the stage to play Falstaff for his old friend Ryan's benefit, and his appearance on one of these occasions, on March 19, 1753, was the last time he ever trod the boards. Next year, when Ryan asked him to play Falstaff again, Quin had lost his front teeth, and wrote to Ryan—

"My dear Friend,

"There is no person on earth whom I wou'd sooner serve than Ryan; but, by God, I will whistle Falstaff for no man."

It was soon after this that he gave Ryan £1000, saying he had left him that sum in his will, but Ryan might cheat the Government of the legacy duty if he liked. During his last years he was on terms of friendly intimacy with Garrick, and spent some days every year at his villa at Hampton. His last excursion was in 1765. The next year he was suffering from an eruption which appeared on his hand, which the doctors feared would turn to mortification. Perhaps if he had been a more obedient patient, things might have gone better with him; but anxiety and good living brought on a fever. The day before he died he is said to have drunk a bottle of claret, and expressed a wish that the last tragic scene was over, and a hope that he should be able to go through it with becoming dignity. He died in his own house at Bath, on January 21, 1766, and was buried in the Abbey Church. Garrick, his former rival, then his friend, wrote the epitaph, which is engraved upon his monument:

"That tongue which set the table in a roar,
And charmed the public ear, is heard no more!
Closed are those eyes, the harbingers of wit,
Which spake before the tongue what Shakespeare writ:
Cold is that hand which, living, was stretched forth
At Friendship's call, to succour modest worth.
Here lies James Quin.—Deign, reader, to be taught,
Whate'er thy strength of body, force of thought;
In Nature's happiest mould, however cast,
To this complexion thou must come at last."

CHAPTER IV.

SHYLOCK (1741).

THIS year, 1741, was indeed a red-letter year in the history of the English stage. Garrick was to make his first appearance in London, at Goodman's Fields, on October 19, as Richard III.; and on February 14, Macklin introduced Shylock to the public as a serious character. The theatre in England has, perhaps, never seen such golden days as those. The Licensing Act, 1737, was scarcely yet in force; it had not, as yet, closed the smaller theatres at Goodman's Fields and the Haymarket, nor had it taken any very active part in destroying the freedom of contemporary authors. There was a large and critical race of theatre-goers, who knew by long experience a good actor from a bad. And already the old conventional, strength-of-lung delivery, that had found favour for so many years, was to give way to a more natural art, in the introduction of which Macklin may fairly be considered the forerunner of the greater artist Garrick.

During the years preceding his performance of Shylock, Macklin had grown a strong favourite with the public. His Shakespearian parts had, however, been few and unimportant. Poins in *Henry IV.*, the Second Gravedigger and Osric in *Hamlet*, a Sailor in *The Tempest*, a Witch in *Macbeth*, a Citizen in *Julius Cæsar*, Sir Hugh

Evans, Trinculo, and, in the beginning of 1741, Malvolio, were the only Shakespearian characters he had attempted. But he had been cast for many important comedy parts in his years of apprenticeship in London. Mrs. Taylor, John Taylor's mother, remembers him at this time as "a smart-looking dark man, and a very sprightly actor, even in juvenile parts, but hard in his manner and apt to resort to his pauses." These pauses became very famous in after-years. For the present, however, it is sufficient to remember that he was rapidly coming to the front, and adding popular parts to his repertory.

In 1737, he and his wife had played Peachum and Mrs. Peachum, in the ever-popular *Beggar's Opera*, and in the same year, he played Lord Froth in *The Double Dealer*. In 1738, he "got another lift," to use his own expression, when he played Jerry Blackacre in *The Plain Dealer*, in which, as we have seen, he gained the applause of the audience and earned the resentment of infallible Pope Quin, by his manner of "throwing off a little." The same year he played Lord Foppington in *The Relapse*, the character of the same name in *The Careless Husband*, Tattle in *Love for Love*, and Scrub in Farquhar's *Beaux Stratagem*. Scrub is a capital low-comedy part, "simple, yet cunning; forward, though timid; a tatler affecting secresy, and a fool assuming wisdom." The fact that he was allotted such characters as Jerry Blackacre and Scrub, shows that Macklin was, as early as 1738, considered a low comedian of the front rank. Before 1739, he also played Ben in *Love for Love*, and Trappanti in *She Would and She Would Not*, "in which," says Cooke, "though he wanted the flippancy with which it is now generally played, he exhibited that low arch comedy and intrigue which belong to the original." The next year he played Marplot in Mrs. Centlivre's comedy, *The Busy*

Body. His interpretation of this character must have been especially successful, and is said to have excelled that of Garrick, who, as Mr. Fox said of him, "could not *look foolish enough* for the part," and soon relinquished it. In the same season he played Gregory (the Mock Doctor) in Fielding's version of *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*; and, in 1740, was cast for such important parts as Fondlewife in *The Old Bachelor*, Lovegold (the Miser) in Fielding's version of *L'Avare*, and Sir Francis Wronghead in Cibber's adaptation of Vanbrugh's comedy, *The Provoked Husband.* Of his performance of Lovegold, Cooke writes, that it gained him a considerable part of his early reputation, that he was to the last well received in it, and that it was always one of the stock pieces with which he engaged himself to perform in his articles with town and country managers. Of his Sir Francis Wronghead, the same biographer says: "It was by far the best of modern times, because Macklin could remember the manners from which the original was composed. Fastidious critics, it is true, sometimes said the portrait was rather too coarse; but they did not consider the difference of the times, when country gentlemen were almost a distinct race of being from what they are now—their manners, their dress, their ideas, and conversation, all smelt of the honest plain sort they sprung from." Kirkman describes him in the same part in the words of a "late excellent (but anonymous) critic," who says that "Consequential stupidity sat well painted in his countenance, and wrought laughable effects, without the paltry resource of grimace; where he affected to be very wise, a laborious, emphatic slyness marked the endeavour humorously; while the puzzles between political and domestic concerns occasioned much food for merriment."

It would be a matter of surprise to us nowadays if a

comedian of so pronounced a type should be cast for Shylock. But when we consider the career of Shylock from the time of Shakespeare to the year 1741, it will be manifest that the present conception of the part was undreamt of, and the fact that Macklin was allowed by the manager to attempt it will not be very astonishing. To understand the position of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, it is necessary to say a few words about Lord Lansdowne's adaptation of the play, which had superseded it.

George Granville, Viscount Lansdowne, was only thirty-four years of age when he published *The Jew of Venice* in 1701. The *restoration* of Shakespeare's plays was at this date no uncommon pastime with men of letters. But, by way of excuse for what we must nowadays regard as acts of Vandalism, we may remember that Rowe, the first serious editor of Shakespeare, did not publish his edition of the plays until 1709, and it was many years before they were approached with that spirit of reverence to which we are accustomed to-day. The lofty patronage extended to the unfortunate poet by his aristocratic editor is well seen in George Granville's *Advertisement to the Reader.*

"The foundation of the following Comedy," he writes, "being liable to some objection, it may be wondered that any one should make choice of it to bestow so much labour upon; But the judicious reader will observe so many Manly and Moral Graces in the Characters and Sentiments, that he may excuse the Story for the sake of the Ornamental parts. Undertakings of this kind are justified by the Examples of those Great Men, who have employed their Endeavours in the same Way. The only dramatique Attempt of Mr. Waller was of this Nature, in his Alteration of *The Maid's Tragedy*; To the Earl of Rochester we owe *Valentinian*; To the Duke of Buckingham, *The Chance*; Sir William

Davenant and Mr. Dryden united in restoring *The Tempest*; *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon*, and *King Lear*, were the works of the three succeeding Laureates," etc., etc.

The Jew of Venice was first performed by his Majesty's servants at the theatre in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1701. Mr. Doggett was Shylock; Mr. Betterton, Bassanio; and Mrs. Bracegirdle, Portia. One Bevill Higgins wrote a prologue, in the form of a rhymed duologue between the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden. The former, with a generous modesty not of this world, is made to say of his mangled drama—

> "These Scenes in their rough Nature Dress were mine,
> But now improv'd with nobler Lustre shine;
> The first rude Sketches *Shakspear's* pencil drew,
> But all the shining Master-Stroaks are new."

But, however much we may prefer the rough nature of the rude sketches to the improvements made upon them by Lord Lansdowne's "Master-Stroaks," it must be admitted that the play is not hacked about and spoiled to so great an extent as in other cases; nor can it be said that the character of Shylock is materially altered from an acting point of view. Lord Lansdowne's chief modifications were to cut out the characters of Launcelot and Old Gobbo, and to introduce a *Masque of Peleus and Thetis*, during which Shylock, supping at a separate table, drinks a toast to Money. These barefaced alterations are modest in comparison with the butchering that some of the plays have undergone, and Lord Lansdowne leaves so much of the original Shylock, that it is difficult to suppose his play suggested to the actor a new reading of the character. Therefore, if Shylock had been played as a serious part up to 1701, I find no justification in Lord Lansdowne's alterations for making

the part a comic one. Certainly his lordship did all in his power to exalt Bassanio at the expense of Shylock, and in omitting Tubal and Shylock's powerful transitions from grief to joy upon receipt of Tubal's news, he cut away one of Shylock's finest tragic scenes. It may be, then, that, without intending to change the character of Shylock, he forced the actor of the past to attempt a comic or character interpretation of it, rather than allow it to sink into utter insignificance. Little or nothing is known of the earlier history of Shylock. Richard Burbadge, who died in 1618, is said to have played the part in a red wig, and posterity, jumping to a hasty and somewhat illogical conclusion, suggests that therefore he played it as a comic character. Even admitting the fact of the red wig, I am by no means inclined to accept the inference. But the fact itself is very questionable. The lines from the funeral elegy on Burbadge:

> "The red-haired Jew
> Which sought the bankrupt merchant's pound of flesh,
> By woman lawyer caught in his own mesh,"

form the whole foundation of the red wig and comic Shylock theory; and as these lines do not appear in either of the contemporary manuscript copies, which are printed verbatim in the Huth Library Catalogue, it is more than probable that they were composed by Mr. John Payne Collier. That Doggett made Lord Lansdowne's Shylock a comic part, in 1701, seems probable. Downes, forty years prompter at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in his "Roscius Anglicanus," speaks of Doggett as "the only Comick original now extant: witness Solon, Nikin, the Jew of Venice," etc. More convincing is Rowe's remark, which must, I think, refer to the same actor: "Though we have seen the *Merchant of Venice* received

and acted as a Comedy, and Shylock acted by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think that the character was tragically designed by the author." But the actors had drifted far away from the author's intention, aided no doubt by Lord Lansdowne's version of the play, and when Kitty Clive came to play Portia, we know that she used to carry her contempt for the dignity of the character so far, as to mimic the leading lawyers of the day in her speeches in the Trial scene.

This, then, was the state of things, when Macklin resolved to banish Lord Lansdowne and the comic Jew of Venice from the stage, and restore Shakespeare and Shylock in all the majesty of his cruel but human nature. The attempt, on the part of a low comedian like Macklin, to overrule the judgments of his predecessors, was a peculiarly bold and hazardous enterprise. It was the more so because, at this period, audiences were composed of men who knew the theatre well, who had fixed ideas about the way in which leading characters should be performed, and were outspoken and decided in their criticism. Sometimes, too, the noisier element of the audiences of that day, would make the disapprobation of the critical an excuse for riot and disorder. Macklin often spoke of these audiences in after-life, and always with respect and gratitude. "The audiences then," he said, "had their different complexions likewise: no indifferent or vulgar person scarcely ever frequented the pit, and very few women. It was composed of young Merchants of rising eminence, Barristers and Students of the Inns of Court, who were mostly well read in plays, and whose judgment was in general worth attending to. We had few riots and disturbances, the gravity and good sense of the pit not only kept the house in order, but the players likewise. Look at your

Prologues, sir, in those days, and in the times long before them, and they all deprecate the judgment of the pit, where the Critics lay in knots, and whose favourable opinion was constantly courted." Macklin was loud in his praises of the pit as it existed in his early days. "Sir," he said to Taylor in after-days, "you then saw no red cloaks, and heard no pattens in the pit, but you saw merchants from the City with big-wigs, lawyers from the Temple with big-wigs, and physicians from the coffee-houses with big-wigs, and the whole exhibited such a formidable grizzle as might well shake the nerves of actors and authors." The reason of this was that the life of that time was favourable to constant critical and unchanging audiences. The City and West End of the town kept equal distances. The merchant lived in the City, and only when he had secured great fortune did he dare to venture as far as Hatton Garden. The lawyers lived in their Inns of Court or about Westminster. The players lived near the theatre. Quin, Booth, and Wilks lived almost all their lives in or about Bow Street, Covent Garden; Colley Cibber in Charles Street; Mrs. Pritchard in Craven Buildings, Drury Lane; Garrick, a great part of his life, in Southampton Street. The smaller players lived or lodged in Little Russel Street, Vinegar Yard, and the little courts about the Garden. "I myself, sir," said the veteran, in detailing these circumstances to his biographer Cooke, "lived always about James Street, or under the Piazzas, so that," he continued, "we could all be mustered by beat of drum, could attend rehearsals without any inconvenience, and save coach hire." Thus at the various ordinaries around Covent Garden, where dinner could be had at *6d.* or *1s.* a head, there was much drinking in mixed company, the actors and their various critics

doubtless discussing the politics of the theatre, with the same freedom and energy, with which clubmen of to-day discuss the politics of the more universal stage.

Inside the theatre, the men who frequented the ordinaries would seat themselves each according to his station.

"None but people of independent fortunes and avowed rank and situation, ever presumed to go into the boxes, and all the lower parts of the house laid out in boxes were sacred to virtue and decorum. No man sat covered in a box, or stood up during the representation, but those in the last row, where no one's prospect could be interrupted. The women of the town who frequented the playhouses then were few (except in the galleries), and those few occupied two or three upper boxes at each side of the house. Their stations were assigned them, and the men who chose to go and *badinage* with them, did it at the peril of their character. 'No *boots* admitted in those days, Mr. Macklin—no box-lobby loungers?' 'No, sir!' exclaimed the veteran, 'neither *boots*, *spurs*, nor *horses*; we were too attentive to the cunning of the scene to be interrupted, and no intrusion of this kind would be endured. But, to do those days common justice, the evil did not exist; *rakes* and *puppies* found another vent for their vices and follies, than the regions of a theatre.'"

It is not to be supposed that the prices of the different seats kept people in any particular place. But conventional respect for rank, and the knowledge that the small coteries in pit or boxes would readily boycott any rash intruder, probably made these distinctions practically regulations of the theatre.

At this time the regulated prices of admission to the theatre were as follows:—boxes, 4*s.*; pit, 2*s.* 6*d.*; first gallery, 1*s.* 6*d.*; and second gallery, 1*s.*: but upon the first run of a new play or pantomime, the boxes were 5*s.*; the pit, 3*s.*; the first gallery, 2*s.*; and the second, 1*s.*

Mr. Fleetwood in 1744 took occasion to raise the prices to the higher scale, on the production of an old pantomime which was revived without expense. This brought about a violent opposition for several nights. Whereupon the manager received a deputation from the pit in the greenroom, and terms were arranged. The advanced prices were to be constantly paid at the door, but the advanced portion of the money was to be returned to such persons as did not choose to sit out the whole of the entertainment. It need hardly be said that by this arrangement the astute manager practically gained his way.

This, then, was Macklin's position, and the state of the theatre at the time when he proposed to Fleetwood that they should revive Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, which for so many years had been superseded by Lord Lansdowne's adaptation. There is no means of knowing it for certain, but it is very probable that Macklin had for some time desired to play Shylock, and had long considered the high dramatic possibilities of the part. Certain it is that his enthusiasm overbore Fleetwood's immediate objections, and the manager gave orders for the play to be put in rehearsal.

As deputy manager, Macklin would have to allot the parts to the various actors and actresses, and it must have gone to his heart to set down Kitty Clive for Portia. But the part belonged to her as of right, and there was no help for it. The audiences were used to her imitations of lawyers in the Trial scene, and were so enamoured of her acting, that they would even tolerate her in Ophelia and Desdemona. Kitty Clive, "a better romp than ever I saw in nature," as her old friend Dr. Johnson said, had established her reputation ten years before this, in an opera by Coffey, entitled

The Devil to Pay. For forty years as a country girl, a hoyden, a chambermaid, or an old woman, she was inimitable. Johnson was full of her praises. "What Clive did best," he said, "she did better than Garrick." But, with the accentuated feminine perversity with which all true artists seemed to be endowed, what she did best she liked least, and this "charming little devil" delighted in nothing so much as to play Ophelia or Desdemona, though her performances in these parts can have been little better than burlesques. Mr. Quin was, of course, marked out for Antonio, and the rest of the cast was not difficult to set out, with the exception of such characters as Tubal and the Gobbos, which had been lost to the stage for some forty years, and about which there could be no stage traditions. The cast as a whole stood thus :

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men.

ANTHONIO*	*Mr.*	*Quin.*
BASSANIO	„	*Milward.*
GRATIANO	„	*Mills.*
SHYLOCK	„	*Macklin.*
LAUNCELOT	„	*Chapman.*
GOBBO	„	*Johnson.*
SALERIO*	„	*Berry.*
MOROCHIUS*	„	*Cashell.*
LORENZO	„	*Havard.*
PRINCE OF ARRAGON	„	*Turbutt.*
DUKE OF VENICE	„	*Winstone.*
TUBAL	„	*Taswell.*
SALARINO	„	*Ridout.*

* The spelling of the names follows Kirkman, who probably copied his Dramatis Personæ from a programme of the performance.

Women.

PORTIA	...	...	...	...	*Mrs. Clive.*
NERISSA	...	...	...	...	„ *Pritchard.*
JESSICA	...	...	...	...	„ *Woodman.*

The play having been cast, Macklin ordered frequent rehearsals, and doubtless intimated to Fleetwood and some of the actors, his intention of playing Shylock as a serious character, though it is said that in actual rehearsal, he merely repeated his lines, and walked through his part without a single look or gesture, and without discovering the business which he had marked out for himself in his interpretation of the Jew. His friends shook their heads at his conceit; his enemies either laughed at him, or flattered him with hopes of his success the surer to work his destruction. Quin bluntly told him he would be hissed off the stage for his presumption, and many of the actors went about complaining "that the hot-headed, conceited Irishman, who had got some little reputation in a few parts, had now availed himself of the manager's favour to bring himself and the theatre into disgrace." Fleetwood at last got nervous, and begged that he would relinquish the idea, pointing out that he was flying in the face of an authority like Lord Lansdowne, and that the public had testified their admiration of the noble lord's play. Macklin, however, stuck to his guns. He had probably learned by this time, that it was his endeavour after natural acting that had won him public favour, and he was clear in his own mind that Lord Lansdowne's comic Jew of Venice was not even a poor relation of Shakespeare's Shylock.

The 14th of February was fixed for the performance, and, some faint echo of the greenroom discussions spreading among the neighbouring coffee-houses, the frequenters of the theatre looked forward with considerable interest

to the production of the play. The story of the course of his triumph is best told in Macklin's own words, as he remembered it in days to come, when he used to fight his battles over again in the snug corner of some Covent Garden coffee-house. It is taken from his biography by Cooke, who was often one of Macklin's audience in the last year of the actor's life.

"'The long-expected night at last arrived, and the house was crowded from top to bottom with the first company in town. The two front rows of the pit as usual were full of critics, who, sir,' said the veteran, 'I eyed through the slit of curtain, and was glad to see them, as I wished in such a cause to be tried by a special jury. When I made my appearance in the greenroom, dressed for the part, with my red hat on my head, my piqued beard, loose black gown, etc., and with a confidence which I never before assumed, the performers all stared at one another, and evidently with a stare of disappointment. Well, sir, hitherto all was right till the last bell rung; then, I confess, my heart began to beat a little. However, I mustered up all the courage I could, and, recommending my cause to Providence, threw myself boldly on the stage, and was received by one of the loudest thunders of applause I ever before experienced.

"'The opening scenes being rather tame and level, I could not expect much applause, but I found myself well listened to. I could hear distinctly in the pit the words "Very well—very well indeed! This man seems to know what he is about," etc., etc. These encomiums warmed me, but did not overset me. I knew where I should have the pull, which was in the third act, and reserved myself accordingly. At this period I threw out all my fire, and, as the contrasted passions of joy for the merchant's losses, and grief for the elopement of Jessica, open a fine field for an actor's powers, I had the good fortune to please beyond my warmest expectations. The whole house was in an uproar of applause, and I was obliged to pause between the speeches to give it vent, so as to be heard. When I went behind the scenes after

this act, the manager met me and complimented me very highly on my performance, and significantly added, "Macklin, you was right at last." My brethren in the greenroom joined in this eulogium, but with different views. He was thinking of the increase of his treasury ; they, only for saving appearances, wishing at the same time that I had broke my neck in the attempt. The trial scene wound up the fulness of my reputation. Here I was well listened to ; and here I made such a silent yet forcible impression on my audience, that I retired from this great attempt most perfectly satisfied. On my return to the greenroom after the play was over, it was crowded with nobility and critics, who all complimented me in the warmest and most unbounded manner, and the situation I felt myself in, I must confess, was one of the most flattering and intoxicating of my whole life. No money, no title could purchase what I felt. And let no man tell me after this what Fame will not inspire a man to do, and how far the attainment of it will not remunerate his greatest labours. By G—d, sir, though I was not worth £50 in the world at that time, yet, let me tell you, I was Charles the Great for that night.'

"A few days afterwards, Macklin received an invitation from Lord Bolingbroke to dine with him at Battersea. He attended the rendezvous, and there found Pope and a select party, who complimented him very highly on the part of Shylock, and questioned him about many little particulars relative to his getting up the play, etc. Pope particularly asked him why he wore a *red* hat. And he answered, because he had read that Jews in Italy—particularly in Venice—wore hats of that colour. 'And pray, Mr. Macklin,' said Pope, 'do players in general take such pains?' 'I do not know, sir, that they do ; but, as I had staked my reputation on the character, I was determined to spare no trouble in getting at the best information.' Pope nodded, and said it was very laudable."

This last story is probably apocryphal, for, although Macklin did wear a red hat as part of Shylock's costume, he cannot have told Bolingbroke so at Battersea, as he

was then living in retirement at Fontainebleau. In the same way, the well-known epigram or epitaph attributed to Pope may or may not have been uttered by him. But it is not impossible that Pope witnessed his performance, and if he did, any inventive wit, who was really the author of the couplet, did well to father it upon the poet, for Pope was an authority in the world, and the world would like to know that he too agreed with the public estimate of Macklin's performance. Certainly it was a magnificent success, and Macklin had done a great work. He had restored prosperity to the management, established his own reputation as an actor, revived and rescued from oblivion a great Shakespearian play, and by his manifestation of natural acting, done much to prepare the audience for the coming of Garrick. For the moment the play was the rage of the town. It ran for no less than twenty-one nights, and on the nineteenth, when Macklin took a benefit, he received handsome presents of money from the noblemen who patronized the drama. But the applause and just praises of the critics were far dearer to his heart than these gifts of money; and for nearly fifty years, whenever he appeared in England or Ireland in this character, he was sure of the hearty welcome of his audience.

The theatrical portraits of a somewhat later date represent Macklin, in the character of Shylock, with a scowling countenance, the lines of his face, naturally harsh, accentuated by art, and wearing a short wispy-pointed beard, which adds effectively to the grasping, repulsive horror of his appearance.* Every one who saw him in this character was greatly moved by the terrible nature of the performance, and many critics have left us

* The portrait by Zoffany, now in the National Gallery at Dublin, bears out this description.

their recollections of its effect. John Bernard, in his "Retrospections," considers it a *chef d'œuvre* that must be classed with the Lear of Garrick, the Falstaff of Henderson, the Pertinax of Cooke, and the Coriolanus of John Kemble. "I have seen many actors," he adds, "who surpassed him in passages, but none that sustained the character throughout, and presented on the whole such a bold and original portrait of the Jew. His success is generally referred to his having been the original on its revival. This is partly true; but in any age he must have produced the same effect, for he possessed by nature certain physical advantages which qualified him to embody Shylock, and which, combined with his peculiar genius, constituted a performance which was never imitated in his own day, and cannot be described in this."

The Dramatic Censor, who was no other than Francis Gentleman, said that Mr. Macklin, in Shylock, "looks the part as much better than any other person as he plays it. In the level scenes his voice is most happily suited to that sententious gloominess of expression the author intended, which with a sullen solemnity of deportment marks the character strongly. In his malevolence there is a forcible and terrifying ferocity. In the third-act scene, where alternate passions reign, he breaks the tones of utterance, and varies his countenance admirably, and in the dumb action of the Trial scene he is amazingly descriptive."

An amusing proof of the terrific effect of Macklin's interpretation of Shylock upon the average mind of the day, is recorded in the following story as told by Bernard: "When he had established his fame in that character, George II. went to see him, and the impression he received was so powerful that it deprived him of rest

throughout the night. In the morning, the Premier, Sir Robert Walpole, waited on the king, to express his fears that the Commons would oppose a certain measure then in contemplation. 'I wish, your Majesty,' said Sir Robert, 'it was possible to find a recipe for frightening a House of Commons.' 'What do you think,' replied the king, 'of sending them to the theatre to see that Irishman play Shylock?'"

Whether the king's hint was taken or not, I cannot say, but the jest helps us to realize how novel and striking in that day was this interpretation of a terrible and terrifying Jew. All who saw him were impressed with awe and admiration at his acting, and the epigrammatist, whether Pope or another, set down the popular verdict quite satisfactorily, in the seven words of the well-worn couplet—

"This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew."

CHAPTER V.

AN ACTOR'S STRIKE (1743).

A FEW months after Macklin's extraordinary success as Shylock, Garrick made his *début* at Goodman Fields. Macklin and he were old acquaintances, or rather friends, Macklin delighting so greatly in his vein of pleasantry and rich humour that he used to say, from the commencement of their acquaintance until the year 1743, they were scarcely two days asunder. In their views of acting there must have been much in common between these two men. Macklin was the precursor of Garrick in trenching on the prescribed and conventional dignity of theatrical enunciation. But the natural style of acting that Macklin had struggled for many weary years to introduce, Garrick established the moment he placed his foot upon the stage, banishing thenceforth and for ever Quin and his mechanism and convention. What Macaulay did for the so-called "dignity of history," Macklin and Garrick did for the "dignity of theatrical enunciation," and from that time to the present day, natural acting, meaning thereby, not the dragging down ideal character to the vulgar level, but a representation of ideal character with such truthfulness that it affects the audience as real, has been the standard of perfection upon the English stage.

Years after their disputes and quarrels, Macklin

would recall the pleasure with which he had witnessed that first performance of Richard III. at Goodman's Fields on October 19, 1741. "It was amazing," he used to say, "how, without any example, but, on the contrary, with great prejudices against him, he could throw such spirit and novelty into the part, as to convince every impartial person, on the very first impression, that he was right. In short, sir, he at once directed the public taste, and, though the players formed the cabal against him with Quin at their head, it was a puff to thunder. The east and west end of the town made head against them; and the little fellow, in this and about half a dozen subsequent characters, secured his own immortality."

In the spring of 1742, Garrick made an engagement with Fleetwood, and came to Drury Lane, where he played King Lear for the first time. Late in the same year the management applied to Fielding for a play, and he, harassed by the illness of his wife, gave them the *Wedding Day*, which he had written about a dozen years back, and was now in no humour to revise. This was produced February 17, 1743, but even Garrick's energy and *prestige* could not make the play go down, though he was supported by Macklin and his wife, Peg Woffington, and Mrs. Pritchard. Perhaps the best thing about the *Wedding Day* is the prologue, which Mr. Austin Dobson thinks was written by Macklin himself.

Mr. Frederick Lawrence attributes the prologue to Fielding, in spite of the fact that in the *Miscellanies* it is headed "Writ and Spoken by Mr. Macklin." It is by no means certain that Mr. Lawrence is not correct in his belief that the doggerel was the work of Fielding himself, and in Arthur Murphy's edition of Fielding's works, there is no hint of Macklin's supposed authorship of

the prologue, which is simply headed "Spoken by Mr. Macklin." The piece seems too witty and clever a doggerel to have been the unaided work of Macklin, and it is at least curious that Kirkman, a great hero-worshipper, does not attribute it to him. In any event, it is worth quoting at length, as a good specimen of eighteenth-century prologues, and one can imagine that, whether or not Macklin had written the piece, he was, of all actors, the man to give it adequate and conspicuous point, and it was manifestly written by one who thoroughly understood his peculiarities and his then position on the stage.

THE PROLOGUE.

(*Spoken by Mr. Macklin.*)

"GENTLEMEN AND LADIES,
" We must beg your indulgence, and humbly hope you'll not be offended,
At an accident that has happened to-night, which was not in the least intended,
I assure you : if you please, your money shall be returned. But Mr. Garrick to-day,
Who performs a principal character in the play,
Unfortunately has sent word, 'Twill be impossible, having so long a part,
To speak to the Prologue :' he hasn't had time to get it by heart.
I have been with the author, to know what's to be done,
'For, till the Prologue's spoke, sir,' says I, 'we can't go on.'
'Pshaw ! rot the Prologue !' says he ; 'then begin without it.'
I told him 'twas impossible, you'd make such a rout about it ;
'Besides, 'twould be quite unprecedented, and I dare say,
Such an attempt, sir, would make them damn the play.'
'Ha ! damn my play !' the frighted bard replies,

'Dear Macklin, you must go on, then, and apologize.'
'Apologize! not I; pray, sir, excuse me.'
'Zounds! something must be done! pr'ythee, don't refuse me;
Pr'ythee go on; tell them, to damn my play will be a damned hard case.
Come, do; you've a good long, dismal, mercy-begging face.'
'Sir, your humble servant; you're very merry.' 'Yes,' says he; 'I've been drinking
To raise my spirits; for, by Jupiter! I found 'em sinking.'
So away he went to see the play; oh, there he sits;
Smoke him, smoke the author, you laughing crits.
Isn't he finely situated for a damning Oh—oh! a—a shrill Whihee! Oh, direful yell!
As Falstaff says, 'Would it were bedtime, Hal, and all were well!'
What think you now? Whose face looks worst, yours or mine?
Ah! thou foolish follower of the ragged Nine.
You'd better stuck to honest Abraham Adams, by half:
He, in spite of critics, can make your readers laugh.
But to the Prologue. What shall I say? Why, faith in my sense,
I take plain truth to be the best defence.
I think, then, it was horrid stuff; and in my humble apprehension,
Had it been spoke, not worthy your attention.
I'll give you a sample if I can recollect it.
Hip! take courage; never fear, man; don't be dejected.
Poor devil! he can't stand it; he has drawn in his head;
I reckon before the play's done, he'll be half dead.
But to the Prologue. It began—
'To-night the comic Author of to-day,
Has writ a—a—a something about a play.
And as the bee—the bee (that he brings by way of simile)—the bee which roves,
Through—through——' Pshaw! pox on my memory! Oh, 'through fields and groves,
So comic poets in fair London town

To cull the flowers of characters wander up and down.'
Then there was a good deal about Rome, Athens, and dramatic rules,
And characters of knaves and courtiers, authors and fools ;
And a vast deal about critics, and good nature, and the poor author's fear ;
And I think there was something about a third night, hoping to see you here.
'Twas all such stuff as this not worth repeating,
In the old prologue cant ; and then at last concludes, thus kindly greeting :
To you, the critic jury of the pit,
Our culprit author does his cause submit ;
With justice, nay, with candour judge his wit ;
Give him, at least a patient, quiet hearing.
If guilty, damn him ; if not guilty, clear him."

These last lines seem to me altogether outside Macklin's scope as an author, and the origin of the suggestion that he wrote as well as spoke the prologue, may have arisen from the fact that it was in some sort a joint production.

The play, however, did nothing for the treasury, and Fleetwood, to the disgust and indignation of the actors, turned to his friends of Hockley-in-the-Hole and Sadler's Wells, to furnish entertainment upon the classic boards of Drury Lane. Mr. Fleetwood's career seems to have been one of linked dissipation and degradation long drawn out. He had wasted his patrimony, wearied the aristocratic acquaintances who had allowed him to share their vices while he had money to lose, and now he was to be found among the pugilists, tumblers, and rope-dancers of Hockley-in-the-Hole. He continued to borrow money at an extravagant rate ; he farmed out the theatre to an ignorant and narrow-minded man named Pierson ; the properties and dresses were more often in the hands

of the bailiff than in the possession of the manager; the actors' salaries were in arrears; and the players themselves displaced for the mummers of Sadler's Wells.

In these circumstances, the principal actors met and consulted about their grievances, sending from time to time deputations to the patentee. These were received by Fleetwood with smiles, courtesy, and promises of amendment; but no amendment came, and, in the summer of 1743, the players met in Mr. Garrick's rooms to agree upon a plan of campaign. About a dozen of the actors assembled, the chief of whom were Garrick, Macklin, Howard, Berry, Blakes, Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Clive, with Mills and his wife. A formal agreement was proposed by Garrick, the effect of which was that they should all secede from Drury Lane, and that no one should accept of any terms from the patentee without the consent of all the seceders. Garrick at this time entertained hopes, which he laid before the assembled actors, that the Duke of Grafton, then Lord Chamberlain, would, upon representation of the ill-treatment they had undergone at Fleetwood's hands, be inclined to allow them to set up for themselves at the Opera House or elsewhere. Macklin at first objected to this agreement, and urged that they should go to the manager once more, and tell him what they intended to do if their just demands were not complied with. Doubtless he remembered the intimate terms on which he had lived with Fleetwood, and was loth to break with him openly after having acted for so long as his deputy and adviser. But whatever his scruples may have been, they were overruled, and a formal agreement in the terms of Garrick's proposals was drawn up, and signed by all the actors. The next step was to prepare a petition for the Lord Chamberlain setting forth their grievances. This, with

the facts duly attested by affidavit, was laid before the Duke of Grafton, but his Grace turned a deaf ear to the actors' petition. For one thing, he did not understand what the grievances of these men were. He cross-examined Garrick as to the amount of his salary, and, on learning that it was £500 a year, lifted up his hands in amazement. "And this you think too little; whilst I have a son, who is heir to my title and estate, venturing his life daily for his king and country at much less than half that sum!" A Lord Chamberlain of this kind was not likely to prove of much assistance to actors with grievances, and their petition was not unnaturally rejected.

Meanwhile the manager was not idle. Paul Whitehead, who, as we have seen, had a deep personal interest in Fleetwood's welfare, drew his pen for the manager, and William Guthrie, the historian, replied on behalf of the actors. Fleetwood himself, rejoicing doubtless at the snub the actors had received from the Duke of Grafton, gathered together some sort of company from the highways and by-ways, and opened the theatre on September 13, with *The Conscious Lovers*, Mrs. Bennet, a useful actress, leaving the seceders to play the chief part. The public were kind to the manager in distress, and the performance, though bad, passed off with partial approbation.

When the actors saw how things were tending, they became as eager for a reconciliation as they had been for a strike. Garrick, who, with all his genius, was naturally somewhat mean and selfish in disposition, set at nought the solemn agreement that he had entered into with his fellow-actors, went privately to Fleetwood, and sold the little garrison of players, whom he had led to destruction, for a substantial rise in his own salary.

The actors then surrendered, with the exception of Macklin, on Fleetwood's own terms. Garrick's salary was raised to six or seven hundred pounds; several of his friends were taken back at the annual stipends they had formerly received; the smaller fry, rather than starve, came back on any terms they could obtain; and Mr. Macklin, who alone had stood out against the strike, was doomed by Fleetwood to perpetual banishment from the very theatre he had raised to a condition of prosperity. This is the account of the matter which Macklin and his friends give, and it is probably more or less accurate. The fact is undisputed that the manager beat the strike, and Garrick and the other actors gave in. Garrick's friends have endeavoured to palliate his conduct towards Macklin, who, with characteristic obstinacy, was for fighting the thing out to the bitter end. But these excuses are not very worthy, nor is there any reason to suppose that Fleetwood's resentment might not have been overcome, if Garrick had cared as much for the honour of his word as he did for the extra hundreds to be added to his salary.

Macklin was not the kind of man to sit down, under an injury of this kind, in a meek and patient spirit. He created a party against the manager and his principal actor, and, as was the fashion of the day, pamphlets, the ready weapons of partisans, displayed the venom of the opposing parties to an eager and admiring public. Garrick offered Macklin an allowance out of his own salary, and obtained a promise of an engagement for Mrs. Macklin from Mr. Rich; but these offers were really only added insults, looking to the position in which Macklin was placed, and were probably proposals framed only to be refused, and to throw dust in the eyes of the public. Macklin was a militant spirit, and

I dare say got a certain amount of pleasure out of a struggle of this kind, where his position was a strong one, and for a time his friends rallied round him with eager zeal. Dr. Barrowby, a noted critic and frequenter of the pit, headed his party, and they determined that, come what might, Garrick should be driven from the stage.

Dr. Barrowby was a physician of some intelligence, but his rage for the theatre and things theatrical, his love of wine and good company, and, above all, his own wild imprudent humour, had done much to destroy his general practice. At this time he had deserted Batson's and Warwick Lane, for the purlieus of Covent Garden, and his patients were almost entirely the performers of the theatres and their connections. There are many wild stories of this remarkable man, but his characteristic reply to a Jew acquaintance, who asked him "how he could eat pork with such a *goût?*" well expresses the recklessness of his humour. "Because I like it!" he replied; "and all I'm sorry for is that I was not born a Jew, for then I should have the pleasure of eating pork-chops and *sinning* at the same time!" A man thoughtless, in speech, of what was wise for himself or owing to others, a man full of biting wit and rash humour,—this was the kind of general that headed Macklin's forces in his struggle with Garrick and the manager.

Garrick's appearance was announced in *The Rehearsal*, and both parties prepared for warfare. Fleetwood, who "trusted more to the arm of flesh than the ablest defence of the greatest writer, was now determined to try the courage of his friends of Hockley-in-the-Hole. They and their associates were distributed in great plenty in the pit and galleries, armed with sticks and bludgeons,

with positive orders from their commanding officers to check the zeal of Macklin's friends by the weightiest arguments in their power."

"As soon as Mr. Garrick entered," continues Davies, "he bowed very low several times, and with the most submissive action entreated to be heard. He was saluted with loud hisses, and continual cries of 'Off! off! off!'" Peas were thrown upon the stage to render walking on it insecure and dangerous. During the first night of this struggle for victory, nothing was heard but hisses, groans, cat-calls, and all manner of uncommon and outrageous clamour and uproar. All Mr. Garrick's attempts to pacify the audience were rejected with outrage, Garrick himself standing at the back of the stage, out of the way of the rotten eggs and apples, which flew from all sides of the house across the footlights.

This theatrical tempest lasted for two nights, and then the manager triumphed. Macklin's friends grew tired of rioting, the eagerness to see Garrick play prevailed, and Macklin was beaten. Even Dr. Barrowby saw that the game was hopeless, and told Macklin that "a continuance of these riots would not only *shut him out* of Drury Lane Theatre for ever, but perhaps *shut him up* in a prison, which was much worse." The riots had failed to drive Garrick from the stage, and the fight between Macklin and his enemies sputtered on in the casual interchange of pamphlets, until the public, and even the parties themselves, grew tired of the dispute.

But Macklin, though expelled from Drury Lane, did not waste his time in idle lamentations, but set to work to realize an idea that he had been considering for some time. Mr. Thomas Davies, in his life of Garrick, speaks of Macklin as "the only player I ever heard of that made acting a science." Macklin seems, indeed, to have

been the first actor who set himself seriously to consider the nature of the character he had to represent, and then applied his wide knowledge of the technical means of representation to the interpretation of that character. A man of this kind, a master of *technique*, who at the same time had sufficiently lofty ideals to prevent him becoming a slave to convention, was eminently fitted to take a position in the theatrical world as a professor of acting, a position in which he deserved the support of all friends of the drama.

No sooner was he expelled from Drury Lane, than he set to work to surround himself with raw recruits, most of them wholly unacquainted with the business of an actor. This ragged contingent he drilled and lectured on the practice and theory of acting, and with a company formed from such material he commenced manager, and was enabled to open the Haymarket Theatre on the 6th of February, 1744. The Licensing Act prevented him taking money at the doors, but the public were admitted by "tickets delivered by Mr. Macklin;" and by advertising and beginning with a concert, the provisions of the Act were sufficiently evaded. The little company had no mock modesty about it. *Othello* was the play chosen, with Macklin as Iago, and "a gentleman," afterwards known as Samuel Foote, as *Othello*. This was Foote's first appearance on the stage; and Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Hill also made his first appearance as Lodovico.

This latter gentleman seems to have been the only person who regarded the experiment as a success. In a little volume, entitled "The Actor," published in 1750, and a sequel published in 1755, he makes many allusions to Macklin and his Haymarket company. No doubt Macklin did great things, considering the difficulties

he had to contend with, and many of his actors owed him a great deal. A man named Yorke, who played the small part of Montano, spoke his few lines with so much propriety of effect, that the managers engaged him from that one performance. He had better perhaps have remained where he was, for his merit was due to education rather than genius. Macklin had raised him from a scene-shifter to a very capable Montano, but he could not climb further by his own unaided ambition. He tried loftier parts, for which he was wholly unfitted, and never gained any more applause. Dr. Hill has written his epitaph in the following histrionic morality: "It is better to be applauded in a livery than laughed at in embroidery."

The general verdict on Foote's Othello was that it was a failure; but Dr. Hill says that, "tho' not without faults, yet perhaps it had more beauties than have been seen in it since. He owed much of the peculiar manner in which he spoke many of the more pathetic speeches in this character, to the instruction of Mr. Macklin, who was then labouring at a scheme which our greatest players have since very judiciously given in to, though they have not very gratefully acknowledged to whom they owed it; we mean, that of bringing playing nearer to nature than it used to be."

Macklin's Iago had perhaps some academic virtues. For the first time, says Dr. Hill, he gave the speech beginning—

"If I can fasten but one cup upon him,"

in which he sets forth his plot against Cassio, "plainly and without ornament;" though formerly it had been the subject of "a world of unnatural contortion of face, and absurd by-play." In this innovation he was fol-

lowed by Garrick, who also recognized that there had been a tendency to overdo Iago, and make too much capital out of his villainy.

There is a very pleasant picture of Macklin instructing his pupils in John O'Keeffe's "Recollections;" and, although it is of a later date than this, the incidents happening about 1765, it is probably more in place here than anywhere else. Macklin's pupils, Miss Ambrose and Mr. Glenville, came for instruction to his house in Dublin, in Dorset Street, far on as you go to Drumcondra; next to his house was a nunnery.

"In Macklin's garden there were three long parallel walks, and his method of exercising their voices was thus: his two young pupils with back-boards (such as they use in boarding schools) walked firmly, slow, and well up and down the two side walks; Macklin himself paraded the centre walk. At the end of every twelve paces he made them stop; and, turning gracefully, the young actor called out across the walk, 'How do you do, Miss Ambrose?' She answered, 'Very well, I thank you, Mr. Glenville!' They then took a few more paces, and the next question was, 'Do you not think it a very fine day, Mr. Glenville?' 'A very fine day indeed, Miss Ambrose!' was the answer. Their walk continued; and then, 'How do you do, Mr. Glenville?' 'Pretty well, I thank you, Miss Ambrose!' And this exercise continued for an hour or so (Macklin still keeping in the centre walk), in the full hearing of their religious next-door neighbours. Such was Macklin's method of training the management of the voice; if too high, too low, a wrong accent, or a faulty inflection, he immediately noticed it, and made them repeat the words twenty times till all was right. Soon after this Mr. Glenville played Antonio to his Shylock, in the *Merchant of Venice;* and Miss Ambrose, Charlotte, in his own *Love à-la-Mode.*"

Dr. Hill, writing of Macklin's educational efforts in 1744, speaks of them in strong praise. He refers to the

olden days, when "the gestures were forced, and beyond all that ever was in nature; and the recitation was a kind of singing." The abolition of these deadening conventionalities he attributes in great measure to Macklin, who certainly did much to destroy the tragedy recitative. "It was his manner," writes Dr. Hill, "to check all the cant and cadence of tragedy. He would bid his pupil first speak the passage as he would in common life, if he had occasion to pronounce the same words; and then giving them more force, but preserving the same accent, to deliver them on the stage." This, we take it, means that he insisted on the nature and character of the phrase being first ascertained, and then taught his pupil how to retain that, while he recited his phrase with due attention to the requirements of a theatre. There is no reason to suppose that Macklin threw aside convention, in so far as it is necessary for theatrical expression, but he was living in a time of a somewhat deadening orthodoxy, and this he did much to destroy. Although this early experiment of Macklin soon came to an end, he constantly, in after-life, schooled young actors for the stage—Sam Foote, Spranger Barry, Macklin's own daughter, Taswell (a famous Dogberry, known to stage students as the author of the *Deviliad*), and a hundred other more or less famous actors, belong to the Macklin school, and owe their success in a great measure to his tuition.

It is almost to be regretted that his first school came to so rapid a conclusion. But the public were eager to see him at Drury Lane. Fleetwood, the bankrupt manager, had fled the country in debt and disgrace; his share in the theatre had been sold to two bankers named Green and Amber; and Mr. James Lacy, assistant-manager to Mr. Rich of Covent Garden, had been

allowed a third share, on condition that he managed the theatre until the debts should be discharged. Mr. Garrick, too, was going over to Dublin, to enter into partnership with Sheridan, so that there was no obstacle to the return of Macklin. On December 19, 1744, he reappeared at Drury Lane, in the *Merchant of Venice*, speaking the following prologue, which, Kirkman says, was written by the Rev. Mr. Dunkin. Whether this is so, or, as others say, he wrote it himself, matters little. It was spoken by Macklin to a crowded house, who constantly interrupted him with plaudits and acclamation, and it shows us to-day the strong personal interest that the audiences of that time took in the politics of the stage, and the fortunes of their favourite players.

THE PROLOGUE.

" From scheming, fretting, famine, and despair,
Behold, to grace restored, an exil'd player ;
Your sanction yet his fortune must complete,
And give him privilege to laugh and—eat.
No revolution plots are mine again ;
You see, thank Heaven ! the quietest of men :
I pray, that all domestic feuds may cease ;
And, beggar'd by the war, solicit peace.
When urged by wrongs, and prompted to rebel,
I fought for freedom, and for freedom fell.
What could support me in the sevenfold flame ?
I was no *Shadrac*, and no angel came.
Once warn'd, I meddle not with State affairs,
But play my part, retire, and say my prayers.
Let nobler spirits plan the vast design ;
Our greenroom swarms with longer heads than mine.
I take no part ; no private jars foment,
But hasten from disputes I can't prevent :

Attack no rival brother's fame or ease,
And raise no struggles—but who most shall please.
United in ourselves, by you approv'd,
'Tis ours to make the slighted muse belov'd ;
So may the Stage again its use impart,
And ripen Virtue as it warms the heart.
May Discord, with her horrid trump retreat,
Nor drive the frighted beauty from her seat ;
May no contending parties strive for sway,
But Judgment govern, and the Stage obey."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRITISH INQUISITION (1754).

The ten years of Macklin's life that followed his return to Drury Lane in 1744 were comparatively uneventful. Garrick and Spranger Barry were the great favourites of the public, and, though Macklin held a very respectable position in popular estimation, it cannot be said for a moment, that he was, during this period, regarded as the rival or equal of little Davy. Barry, who had already appeared in Dublin as Othello, came to England in 1746, and was engaged by Lacy to play the Moor with Macklin as Iago. His *début* on the English stage, on October 4 of this year, was a considerable success. On arriving in England, he had placed himself very wisely in Macklin's hands, and accepted him as his theatrical guide, philosopher, and friend. Before he made his first appearance at Drury Lane, he used to be seen in company with Macklin, walking in St. James's Park and other places of public resort; and, his manly, noble appearance attracting the attention of the loungers, Macklin informed them, in answer to their inquiries, that his friend was an Irish nobleman—to wit, the *Earl of Munster*. This gave the public a somewhat factitious interest in his appearance on the stage, as the knowing ones whispered about the theatre that the *débutant* was a well-known Irish peer; but Barry wanted no advertise-

ment of this sort, and the discovery of the jest in no way diminished the public interest in his performances.

The Rebellion of 1745 was the ruin of Messrs. Green and Amber, the new patentees, and the theatre was, throughout the year, almost wholly deserted. Macklin, making his first attempt as an author, produced his tragedy of *Henry VII.; or, the Popish Impostor* in 1746. In the same year he wrote a farce, entitled *The Suspicious Husband; or, the Plague of Envy*, by way of criticism on Dr. Hoadley's comedy, *The Suspicious Husband.* Of these dramatic ventures we shall speak more fully when we come to treat of Macklin as an author. Messrs. Green and Amber becoming insolvent in 1747, the theatre passed into the hands of Mr. Lacy and Mr. Garrick, and several of the most notable players, including Mr. and Mrs. Macklin, signed articles with the new patentees. On September 15 of this year the theatre was opened under the new management, Garrick speaking Dr. Johnson's well-known prologue; and at last Drury Lane was under the direction of men who were both eager and able to do their best for the highest interests of the stage.

It was probably at this time—though Cooke places it at an earlier date—that Garrick, Macklin, and Mrs. Woffington lived together in lodgings in Bow Street, and formed a kind of social triumvirate for the improvement of theatrical taste, and for the wider diffusion of histrionic science. They are said to have had a common purse; and many curious stories of their mode of life, scandalous and otherwise, are found in the stage anecdotes of the day. The arrangement, such as it was, soon came to an end, the public purse being ultimately found to contain nothing more than a deficit of some hundred pounds. In the spring of 1748, Macklin and his wife made a visit to Ireland, being engaged at a salary of £800 by

Sheridan, the manager of the Smock Alley Theatre. Sheridan and Macklin soon quarrelled, and the latter cancelled his agreement, returning to England in 1749. In 1750 he engaged himself to Rich at Covent Garden, in whose company were Barry, Quin, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Woffington. It was in this year that the famous contest of the Romeos took place. Barry and Mrs. Cibber played the lovers at Covent Garden, and Garrick and Miss Bellamy—then a rising young actress with promising powers—at Drury Lane. Every one, be he high or low, had his say about the two performances. Garrick had to fight against Barry's good looks; and the feminine verdict was doubtless that of the lady of fashion, who said: "When I saw Garrick, if I had been his Juliet, I should have wished him to leap up into the balcony to me; but when I saw Barry, I should have been inclined to jump down to him." Macklin played Mercutio at Covent Garden with success, and Mrs. Macklin was doubtless an excellent Nurse; but the audiences came, during the twelve nights' run of the two performances, mainly to form an opinion of the rival Romeos, and we do not hear much of Macklin's interpretation, which must, one would think, have been a trifle dull and heavy. Macklin used to give his view of the different performances in these two descriptions of the garden scene: "Barry comes into it, sir, as great as a lord, swaggering about his love, and talking so loud that, by G——d, sir, if we don't suppose the servants of the Capulet family almost dead with sleep, they must have come out and tossed the fellow in a blanket. But how does Garrick act this? Why, sir, sensible that the family are at enmity with him and his house, he comes creeping in upon his toes, whimpering his love, and looking about him *just like a thief in the night.*"

Macklin, during this period of his life, added to his income by giving lessons in elocution, not only to those who aspired to tread the boards, but, as his biographers note with pride, to "people of the first rank and character." In 1751, some of these ladies and gentlemen of fashion "became desirous of performing in public in order to display their own acquirements and abilities, and at the same time to give an incontestible proof of Mr. Macklin's eminence in theatrical instructions." "A play performed on the common stage by persons of distinction," says Kirkman, "is an incident that this nation has, perhaps, the honour of having first produced to the world." Be this as it may, the account of the performance has a somewhat modern ring about it, and, in these days of amateur theatricals, will doubtless have an interest for our readers. The play chosen was *Othello*, and the part of the Moor was assigned to Sir Francis Delaval, a well-known character of the day. He was a boon companion of Samuel Foote, and there are a hundred extravagant and scandalous stories of their witty orgies, and more or less disreputable jests. He was the leading showman of the day, and his ambition desired to be nothing better. He was an agreeable, gay companion, reckless, and perhaps generous in small things, mean and contemptible in the greater affairs of life. Foote himself was to have played, but for some reason did not, and the cast was as follows:—

Men.

OTHELLO	*Sir Francis Delaval.*
IAGO	*John Delaval, Esq.*
CASSIO	—— *Delaval, Esq.*
BRABANTIO and LODOVICO ...	*Sim Pine, Esq.*
RODERIGO	*Capt. Stephens.*

Women.

DESDEMONA	...	...	... *Mrs. Quon.*
ÆMILIA	...	...	... *Mrs. Stevens.*

About a thousand tickets were issued for the notable performance; Drury Lane was taken for one night at a cost of £150, and nearly £1000 was spent upon the dresses. On the night, the house was filled with persons of the first fashion; the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other members of the royal family, were in the stage-box, stars and garters glittered from the upper galleries, diamonds and embroidery shone from every corner of the house. Lord Orford, in his Memoirs, says that there was so much fashionable excitement about the performance that, though the 7th was fixed for the Naturalization Bill, yet "the House adjourned to attend at Drury Lane, where Othello was acted by a Mr. Delaval and his family, who had hired the theatre on purpose. The crowd of people of fashion was so great that the footman's gallery was hung with ribands." So large was the crowd outside, that the ladies and gentlemen had to leave their coaches and chairs and wade through dust and filth to get to the house; and "many stars and garters appeared in the public-houses adjacent to the theatre, to wait for entrance with greater safety." All this was, we must remember, in honour of Mr. Macklin's eminence as a theatrical instructor; and, could we but believe the criticisms on the performance that have come down to us, it was indeed worthy of such an audience. "There was a force," says Kirkman, "that no theatrical piece acted upon any private Stage ever came up to." Sir Francis Delaval's Othello was "doubtless one of the finest ever produced on a stage;" "his expression of anguish by the monosyllable '*Oh!*' was

truly affecting." His manner of asking Cassio's pardon in the last act "had something in it so like the man of honour, and so unlike all imitation, that the audience could not be easily reconciled afterwards to the hearing it from anybody else;" and when he embraced Desdemona, on their meeting at Cyprus, "he set many a fair breast among the audience a-palpitating." All the rest acted their parts with equal effect; and doubtless Macklin gained a capital advertisement for his elocution lectures by successfully exhibiting his fashionable pupils before so splendid an assembly.

Macklin's daughter was, however, his best pupil, and an actress of considerable merit. She made her first appearance in a woman's part, in the character of Athenais in Lee's tragedy of *Theodosius*, in 1750, and until her death in 1781, remained in the front rank of leading ladies. She is said to have been born at Portsmouth in or about 1734. Her father dedicated her to the stage; and she played the little Duke of York in *Richard III.* in 1742, and in the next year Arthur in *King John*. It is recorded that she played several other child's parts; but she does not appear to have acted between 1746 and 1750. During these four years her father spared no expense to give her a good education. French, Italian, music, dancing, and, indeed, any accomplishment that he considered might be useful to an actress, she was taught by the best masters. At Macklin's bankruptcy, he was found to have spent no less a sum than £1200 on his daughter's education. She was talented, and well instructed, but does not appear to have had any real touch of genius. Her elegant figure, her taste, her music, her just emphasis, and her melodious voice—these are the qualities she is credited with, rather than any powers of moving the feelings of her audience; and

it is impossible to suppose she would have been drawn to the stage, if it had not been for her early training. Nevertheless, she was an excellent actress, capable of sustaining the most important parts; and we find her acting Monimia, Ophelia, Portia, Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Juliet, Lady Anne in *Richard III.*, and Desdemona. She created several characters, the most successful of which was Lucinda in Foote's *Englishman in Paris*. This was a breeches-part, written to show off her peculiar powers of singing and dancing. She first played this in 1752–3, and continued to play it during the rest of her career with great success. She often assumed men's attire, being very popular in such parts, and indirectly this habit, it is said, led to her death. Through "buckling her garter too tightly, a large swelling took place in her knee, which, from motives of delicacy, she would not suffer to be examined till it had increased to an alarming size." An operation was then permitted, but unfortunately it was too late, and she died on July 3, 1781, in the forty-eighth year of her age.

She had borne through life an unblemished reputation, and every historian of the theatre speaks with pleasure of her excellent character. She seems to have been a woman of religious sympathies, and to have led a careful and quiet life. She died worth a considerable sum of money, but left it by will away from her father, unless, indeed, he should survive certain other legatees. Seeing that at this time he was a man of over eighty, it seems almost a mockery to have done this. Moreover, when we know that Macklin was by no means well provided for at this time, it is difficult to guess why his daughter should have left him nothing. There are rumours of quarrels between them, which are certainly not borne out by Macklin's letters to his daughter, and I doubt whether

there is any foundation for them. Taylor, in his record of Mary Macklin, says that Macklin was a severe father.

"He gave his daughter, indeed, an accomplished education, and for some years came annually from Dublin, his head-quarters, to play his Shylock and Sir Archy for her benefit, but he always made her pay for the journey and his performance, and she was always obliged to lend her gold watch to a friend during his stay in London, lest he should insist upon having it, as he was too austere for her to dispute his will. Her figure was good, and her manner easy and elegant; but her face was plain, though animated by expression. She was a very sprightly actress, and drew from real life. Her character throughout life was not only unimpeached, but highly respected."

Bernard, too, a peculiarly unreliable man, knows the origin of the quarrel between them, which, as it is amusing enough, is best given in his own words. He was a young strolling actor in Suffolk when he says that he met Miss Macklin, and he wrote his retrospections in a green old age.

"At Needham, our next remove, I became acquainted with Miss Macklin, the actress, who had retreated to this little haven from the troubled element of public life, to live upon the income she had accrued by her professional labours. She was an admirable reader (with a true Shakespearian attachment), and her voice and figure led me to perceive some of the grounds upon which she had founded her popularity. She was not at this time upon good terms with her father, which was owing to a domestic occurrence; but their original disagreement, as she informed me, grew out of a reading in Portia. She always said that 'Mercy was mightiest in the *mightiest*,' but he, maintaining it 'was mightiest *in* the mightiest,' showed her no mercy, but instantly renounced her."

I cannot but think that these rumours sprang from

Miss Macklin's peculiar will, and that, whatever quarrel there may have been between them, we are not able now to learn what caused it. Certainly no daughter could have had a wiser and kinder father than Macklin appears to have been in many respects, and his letters to her at different periods throughout her life, seem to us written in a spirit that speaks of a real friendship existing between father and daughter.

After a few more uneventful years upon the boards, Macklin, who appears to have lectured himself into a strong belief in his own wisdom, determined, in 1753, to quit the stage to carry out a wild scheme for instructing the public and making his own fortune at the same time. He was tired of lecturing to stage aspirants and fashionable amateurs; he longed to teach the world. Filled with this ambition, he closed his dramatic career (as he thought) on December 20, 1753, at a farewell benefit at Drury Lane, and, commending his daughter to the protection and indulgence of the public, left the stage to set on foot the British Inquisition.

Macklin intended to carry out a great scheme that had evidently been revolving in his mind for some time. He had visions of fame and fortune, and, to realize these, on March 11, 1754, he opened a public ordinary, and commenced tavern-keeper. The sight of so famous an actor drew the public when the place first opened, and, had Macklin thought more of fortune than of fame, the thing might perhaps have been a pecuniary success. But the tavern was only his first step towards the lecture-room, and his idea was to bring the wits, the Templars, and all the literary loungers of London together, over the dinner-table, that they might afterwards adjourn to listen to his words of wisdom from the *rostrum*. There is something touching in the sight of the great actor, the artist, as we

should now call him, standing behind the chairs of his guests and ministering to their gastric wants in the vain hope that they would afterwards listen with respect to his lectures on the Comedy of the Ancients, and the Stages of Greece and Rome. The conduct of his tavern has been well described by Cooke, who had the account he quotes from a "literary gentleman" who had dined at Macklin's ordinary.

"Dinner being announced by public advertisement to be ready at four o'clock, just as the clock had struck that hour, a large tavern bell, which he had affixed to the top of the house, gave notice of its approach. This bell continued ringing for about five minutes; the dinner was then ordered to be dished; and in ten minutes afterwards it was set upon the table, after which the outer room door was ordered to be shut, and no other guest was admitted.

"Macklin himself always brought in the first dish, dressed in a full suit of clothes, etc., with a napkin slung across his left arm. When he had placed the dish on the table, he made a low bow and retired a few paces back towards the sideboard, which was laid out in a very superb style, and with every possible convenience that could be thought of. Two of his principal waiters stood beside him; and one, two, or three more as occasion required them. He had trained up all his servants several months before for this attendance; and one principal rule (which he laid down as a *sine quâ non*) was, that not one single word was to be spoken by them whilst in the room, except when asked a question by one of the guests. The ordinary, therefore, was carried on by *signs* previously agreed upon; and Macklin, as principal waiter, had only to observe when anything was wanted or called for, to communicate a *sign*, which the waiters immediately understood and complied with.

"Thus was dinner entirely served up, and attended to, on the side of the house, all in dumb show. When dinner was over, and the bottles and glasses all laid upon the table, Macklin, quitting his former situation, walked gravely up to

the front of the table and hoped 'that all things were found agreeable;' after which he passed the bell-rope round the back of the chair of the person who happened to sit at the head of the table, and, making a low bow at the door, retired."

But when he retired, it was only to read over the notes of the lecture that he was soon to deliver to these same guests. His ordinary, already in full swing, with its complement of cooks and waiters, was now supplemented by a lecture-room, and on November 21 the British Inquisition, which was to teach mankind universal wisdom, with Macklin as professor of things in general, opened its doors to a public that was at least able to appreciate the humorous side of poor Macklin's self-conceit. The following advertisement will explain the project and the projector's measure of himself and the public.

"At Macklin's Great Room in Hart Street, Covent Garden, this Day being the 21st of November, will be opened

THE BRITISH INQUISITION.

This Institution is upon the plan of the ancient Greek, Roman, and Modern French and Italian Societies of liberal investigation. Such subjects in Arts, Sciences, Literature, Criticism, Philosophy, History, Politics, and Morality, as shall be found useful and entertaining to society, will there be lectured upon and freely debated; particularly Mr. Macklin intends to lecture upon the Comedy of the Ancients, the use of their masks and flutes, their mimes and pantomimes, and the use and abuse of the Stage. He will likewise lecture upon the rise and progress of the modern Theatres, and make a comparison between them and those of Greece and Rome, and between each other; and he proposes to lecture also upon each of Shakespeare's Plays; to consider the original stories from whence they are taken;

the artificial or inartificial use, according to the laws of the drama, that Shakespeare has made of them; his fable, moral character, passions, manners, likewise will be criticized, and how his capital characters have been acted heretofore, are acted, and ought to be acted. And as the design of this inquiry is to endeavour at an acquisition of truth in matters of taste, particularly theatrical, the lecture being ended, any gentleman may offer his thoughts upon the subject.

"The doors will be open at 5, and the lecture begin precisely at 7 o'clock, every Monday and Friday evening.

"Ladies will be admitted, price one shilling each person.

"The first lecture will be on Hamlet.

"N.B.—The questions to be debated after the lecture, will be whether the people of Great Britain have profited by their intercourse with or their Imitation of the French nation.

"There is a public ordinary every day at four o'clock, price three shillings. Each person to drink port, claret, or whatever liquor he shall choose.

"N.B.—This evening the public Subscription Card-room will be opened. Subscriptions taken in by Mr. Macklin."

The thing took with the town at first, and there was a very large number of people present on the opening night. The simple went to learn, the witty to laugh and sneer, the learned to wonder at Macklin's folly. Indeed, at first it took too well—well enough to cause imitation, and it was sufficiently popular to form the basis of a burlesque satire, by Foote at the Haymarket. "The new madness," wrote Horace Walpole, on Christmas Eve of the same year, "is Oratories. Macklin has set up one under the title of 'The British Inquisition;' Foote another against him; and a third man has advertised another to-day." Foote's burlesque of Macklin's lecture gives in a distorted, unfair, but somewhat truthful way, the picture of what it was. The chief characteristic of the whole thing was its conceit

and this Foote would burlesque in his own inimitable style, until even Macklin himself was driven to the Haymarket to see what Foote was doing to make *his Oratory* so popular.

Foote used to represent Macklin in his armchair, examining a pupil in classics.

"Well, sir, did you ever hear of Aristophanes?"

"Yes, sir; a Greek Dramatist, who wrote——"

"Ay; but I have got twenty comedies in those drawers, worth his *Clouds* and stuff! Do you know anything of Cicero?"

"A celebrated Orator of Rome, who in the polished and persuasive is considered a master of his art."

"Yes, yes; but I'll be bound he couldn't teach Elocution."

"Perhaps not, sir."

"Perhaps, then, you have heard of one Roscius whom Cicero praised?"

"Certainly, sir; a very celebrated Actor."

"Stuff! he couldn't have played Shylock."

This exhibition being laughed at and talked of greatly, it was very natural that Macklin himself should go to see it. To escape observation, he placed himself in a back seat in the boxes. The important scene came, and, as Foote convulsed the house with his successful mimicry, Macklin writhed and muttered, not knowing whether to run out or upon the stage. Foote wound up this display with a kind of charge to his pupil.

"'Now, sir, remember, I, Charles Macklin, tell you, there are no good plays among the ancients, and only one among the moderns, and that is the *Merchant of Venice*, and there is only one part in that, and only one man that can play it. Now, sir, as you have been very attentive, I'll tell you an anecdote of that play. When a Royal Personage, who shall be nameless (but who doesn't live a hundred miles from Buckingham House), witnessed my performance of the Jew,

he sent for me to his box, and remarked, 'Sir, if I were not the Prince—ha—hum—you understand?—I should wish to be Mr. Macklin!' Upon which I answered, 'Royal Sir, being Mr. Macklin, I do not desire to be the——' Macklin could no longer contain himself, but, starting up, he stretched his body forward, and shouted, 'No, I'll be d——d if I did!' In an instant the audience turned and opened on him like a pack of hounds. Hunted from the boxes, he speedily descended the stairs, and, in the manner of Sir Anthony Absolute, took six steps at a time."

The thing was a burlesque, and a cruel one, but it served the people to laugh at, and probably did as much as anything to bring Macklin's experiment to a speedy termination. Foote, too, would sometimes attend Macklin's lectures on purpose to tease and annoy him by asking him ridiculous questions. There are many stories told of his jests in the lecture-room at Macklin's expense. On one occasion Macklin was lecturing on "Memory," and, as he enlarged on the subject, dwelt on the importance of exercising memory as a habit. He took occasion to say that he himself could learn anything by heart on once hearing it, so perfectly had he trained his memory. Upon this Foote handed him up a piece of paper, on which was written the following immortal nonsense, and desired Mr. Macklin to read it, and afterwards repeat it from memory.

"So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf, to make an apple-pie; and at the same time a great she-bear, coming up the street, pops its head into the shop, 'What! no soap?' So he died, and she very imprudently married the barber; and there were present the Picanninies and the Joblilies and the Garyulies, and the Grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round button at the top; and they all fell to playing the game of catch as catch can, till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots."

How Macklin took this ridiculous jest history does not relate. Probably he refused to read the paper, and Foote handed it about afterwards; but if he read and repeated it, his system of memory must have been a very complete one indeed.

While Macklin was thundering curses at Foote and his follies from the platform of his great room at Hart Street, or poring over books and papers to prepare his lectures for the evening, his cooks and waiters plundered their foolish easy master at every turn. The ordinary, which might well have been a success in the hands of a man of business, became a ruinous failure under the management of the actor turned *savant*, and in the beginning of 1755 Macklin was face to face with bankruptcy. He had retired from the stage only to lose his hard-earned savings, and to find that the world would not take him as their philosopher and guide at his own valuation. Macklin was an honest man, and, seeing the condition of his affairs, he made no ineffectual endeavour to continue his scheme at the expense of his creditors. On January 25, 1755, he filed his petition, or went through whatever was the then equivalent form, and Charles Macklin, "vintner, coffeeman, and chapman," became, once more, an actor in search of an engagement.

CHAPTER VII.

THE IRISH STAGE.

The Irish stage in the eighteenth century might form the subject of a volume of stage history of considerable interest. Dublin was highly favoured by the actors of this age, and we find Garrick, Barry, Mossop, Macklin, Peg Woffington, and a host of other celebrities, courting the favours of Dublin audiences. The subject is by no means foreign to a biography of Macklin, who not only was an Irishman by birth, but spent several years of his life as an actor in Dublin, was instrumental in building the Crow Street Theatre in that city, and may be regarded as the histrionic tutor of silver-toned Barry, who was perhaps the greatest actor Ireland ever produced. I propose, therefore, to sketch shortly the fortunes of the Irish stage, with especial reference to the periods at which Macklin took a leading part in making its history.

To begin as nearly as possible at the beginning, one may mention that there was a Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin soon after the Restoration. The house in Smock Alley was built and rebuilt on many occasions, but it dated back at least to 1671, when it is recorded that the gallery, being overcrowded, fell into the pit. The religious portion of Dublin regarded the theatre with puritanical suspicion; the very alley in which it was built had been named by them on account of the supposed character

of its fair inhabitants, and, for some years after the accession of Charles II., the Dublin theatre does not seem to have been much more than a successful provincial establishment. At first the Smock Alley playhouse was managed by Ashbury, an actor of some merit, and afterwards by Tom Elrington. He was a great actor in the estimation of the old Dublin playgoers, who in a later age would shake their heads and say: "I have known Tom Elrington in the part of Bajazet to be heard all over the Blind Quay; and I do not believe you could hear Barry or Mossop out of the house." The Smock Alley Theatre was opposed by a new house in Rainsford Street, in the "Earl of Meath's liberty," beyond the jurisdiction of the city, and afterwards by a theatre built in Aungier Street. This theatre was built about 1733, by a very large subscription of noblemen and gentlemen. None of these, according to Victor, knew anything about theatre-building, and the result was that they built "a very sumptuous but a very bad theatre," in which, when there was a full house, a great part in the galleries could neither see nor hear. Bad, however, as the house was, it served for Peg Woffington, her childhood being past, to make her first appearance in the part of Ophelia, in February, 1737.

The Dublin theatres were so ill-directed after the deaths of Ashbury and Elrington, "that few performers of any degree of eminence either arose or resorted thither before the year 1740, and dramatic performances, until about that period, were sunk into contempt and almost wholly lost." In January, 1746, Garrick and Sheridan were sharers at the Theatre Royal, Dublin—the Aungier Street Theatre—and Barry was engaged at a salary. Garrick left Dublin in May, 1746, and in October of the same year Mr. Victor became treasurer

and deputy manager with Sheridan. From his "History of the Theatres in London and Dublin," we are able to gather much information about the Irish stage during the next fourteen years.

In 1747, a great improvement was made in the conduct of the Dublin theatre, mainly owing, if we may believe his own account of it, to the stout heart and bold conduct of Mr. Victor. It appears that the stage was in danger of being ruined by the rowdyism of the young gentlemen of Dublin, and though Victor, with his English notions of law and order, exclaimed against the indecency of the admission behind the scenes of "every idler that had a laced coat," yet the custom continued; so that, Victor tells us, he has seen "actors and actresses rehearsing within a circle of forty or fifty of these young gentlemen, whose time ought to have been better employed." Victor proposed to the manager several methods of protecting the theatre from the wanton insults of this dissolute set, but they commonly met him with the unanswerable argument, "You forget yourself; you think you are on English ground!"

However, in January, 1747, an incident occurred which brought this nuisance to a termination. A young *gentleman*—and this status of gentleman seems to have been the only defence ever urged for his conduct—went to the pit of the theatre "enflamed with wine," as Victor says. He appears to have climbed over the spikes on to the stage, and made his way into the greenroom, where he commenced to insult one of the actresses, "in such indecent terms aloud as made them all fly to their dressing-rooms," whither he pursued them with so much noise that the business of the scene was interrupted. Miss Bellamy, who was then wanted on the stage, was locked in her room in fear of this young gentleman, and

Mr. Sheridan had to leave his character of *Æsop* for the moment, while he and the guard and his servants restored this young roysterer to his friends in the pit. From the pit he began to hurl oranges at Mr. Sheridan, who had to appeal to the public for protection; and after the play, he waited on Mr. Sheridan with the purpose of abusing him, until Sheridan lost his temper, and broke the young gentleman's nose for him.

It is needless to follow the course of events in detail. A party was formed of the young gentleman's friends, pamphlets and letters were written on both sides, the theatre became a place of riot, and sober citizens who came to enjoy their play were threatened with violence if they supported Mr. Sheridan. The college students seem to have taken the manager's part against this particular offender, who was not one of their set, and made matters much worse by executing a kind of lynch law upon some of the rioters, whom they captured and punished in the college precincts, with the approval, it is said, of "their good provost."

Things came to such a pass that the Lord Justices shut the theatre, and the scene of the dispute was now shifted to the law courts. Sheridan was tried and acquitted for assaulting the young gentleman; and on the other hand, the judge having unpacked the jury, so to speak, greatly to the surprise of the players and of the young gentleman himself, he was found guilty and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and to pay a fine of £500. "This ample redress," says Victor, "was procured for the manager by obtaining that *respect to be paid to the scenes of the Theatre Royal in Dublin* which no other theatre ever had the happiness to maintain; for from that hour not even the first man of quality in the kingdom ever asked or attempted to get on the

scenes, and before that happy era every person who was master of a sword was sure to draw it on the stage doorkeeper if he denied him entrance."

In the winter of 1747 Woodward was engaged, who was, among other things, a great harlequin and composer of pantomimes, and from this class of entertainment the managers expected great things. But though the new pantomime was not produced until February 1748, after much preliminary puffing in the newspapers, it was played "to an audience under a hundred pounds." On the second night, when it was played with the *Fair Penitent*, in which Sheridan and Bellamy acted, there was only £20 in the house; from which facts, mournful enough at the time, Victor draws wise conclusions of the intellectual superiority of Dublin audiences, and the folly of producing pantomimes before them. It is clear, whatever value we may put on Victor's conclusions, that Dublin at this time was a city of playgoers. The prices they paid, the companies they supported, and the eagerness with which they took part in the politics of the theatre, go to show the reality of the audience's enthusiasm. O'Keeffe gives the following interesting account of Dublin audiences:—

"In my day there was no half price at a theatre in Ireland, so that a noisy fellow, for paying his 6*d.* after the third act, as in the London theatres, could not drive a new comedy for ever from the stage by a hiss (for a single hiss may do that); neither could a critic come into the pit, or a man of fashion into the boxes, for his 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* 6*d.*, and censure the fourth and fifth act of a play, ignorant of the previous parts which led to the *dénouement*. In Cork and Limerick there was no 1*s.* gallery—only one gallery, and that 2*s.*; so there was no seeing any part of a play under that price. In Dublin no females sat in the pit; and none, either male or female, ever came to the boxes, except in full dress. The upper boxes, in

a line with the 2*s.* gallery, were called lattices ; and over them, even with the 1*s.* gallery, were the slips called pigeon-holes. The audience part of the Dublin theatre was in the form of a horseshoe. In Dublin, oranges and nonpareil refreshed the audience ; in Limerick, peaches, which were brought in baskets to the box door. The price of a peach four inches in diameter was a $\frac{1}{2}d$."

O'Keeffe can tell us, too, all about the habits and customs of Dublin audiences ; how they brought down the curtain by their applause on the stage death of a "star," and would never listen to Horatio's "Farewell, sweet Prince," or the moral of *Romeo and Juliet ;* how the men of fashion used to invade the greenroom, and how the house was filled on "Command nights," when the viceroy was present in person. From all of which we gather that this was a time of unexampled theatrical prosperity in Ireland, which the actors failed to benefit from, owing to their own vanity, jealousy, and unbusiness-like extravagance.

Macklin's first theatrical visit to Dublin took place in 1748. Sheridan, in the spring of that year, came over to London to engage new "stars" for the coming year, and Mr. and Mrs. Macklin were secured for two years at the very handsome salary of £800 per annum. Several disputes, however, took place between Macklin and his manager, and he did not remain in the company for many months. Macklin's own account of the matter is that Sheridan dismissed him and his wife in the middle of a season, without giving them any notice, or without assigning any cause, and at the same time refused to pay Mr. Macklin the money that was due to him, which was £800, according to agreement. Congreve tells us that Macklin had at this time run mad about "marketable fame," that he used to measure the size of the letters in

the playbills announcing himself and Sheridan, for fear the manager should have a hair-breadth's advantage; and "at last, to show his thorough contempt for Sheridan as manager, he went on the stage one night after the play and gave out a comedy for his wife's benefit without either settling the play or the night with the manager." In the result Macklin filed a bill in Chancery against Sheridan, who paid £300 into court, which Macklin took out rather than stay longer in Ireland, and returned to England, commencing manager at Chester for a short season prior to returning to Covent Garden. Sheridan was a quarrelsome fellow, but Macklin probaby showed his usual desire for mastery, which the manager had a right to resent, and there is reason to suppose that Macklin had no one but himself to blame for the loss of his engagement. Besides the loss of Macklin and his wife, Miss Bellamy also left the company to play with Garrick in London. Dublin in those days was regarded as the nursery for London, and no player of any consequence stayed there longer than they could help, their ambition then, as now, being to appear in the metropolis. Miss Bellamy was replaced by Miss Danvers, who appeared with great success in the character of Indiana.

In 1749, the company was reinforced by Theophilus Cibber, Mr. Digges, and Mr. Mossop. Cibber, of course, was a well-known actor, but Digges and Mossop were new to the stage. In the summer of 1751 Mrs. Woffington came over from England, and was engaged by the manager, for the ensuing season only, at a salary of £400. "The happy consequences of that engagement," says Victor, "are recent in the knowledge of every one who frequented the theatre at that time;" and, he adds, by way of detail, that "by four of her characters, performed ten nights each that season, viz. Lady Townly, Maria (in

The Nonjuror), Sir Harry Wildair, and Hermione there, were taken above £4000—an instance never known in any theatre from four old stock plays, and two of them in which the manager acted no part." The next season Mrs. Woffington's salary was raised to £800, but the management had no reason to regret her engagement, and at the end of the year found their profits within £200 of the former season.

We may pass lightly over the affairs that preceded the starting of the new theatre in Crow Street, in the foundation of which Macklin was so intimately interested. Much might be written of Mrs. Woffington, and the opening of the Beef Steak Club in 1753; of Digges in *Mahomet* and the Anti-Courtier riots, which drove Sheridan from the stage for a while; of Foote's appearance in 1756, and re-appearance in 1757 with Tate Wilkinson in his train, and the various fortunes of the managers during these years. But this would require a volume of Irish stage history, and we must content ourselves with a few pages on the subject, noting particularly the interest taken by Macklin in the Dublin theatre, and the effect of his occasional appearances and interferences among the Irish managers.

Victor and Sheridan opened as usual in October, 1757. Honoured by the patronage of his Grace the Duke of Bedford, who was Lord Lieutenant, they looked forward to a successful season. In hopes of thwarting Barry's proposed plans of building a new theatre, they petitioned to Parliament that the number of theatres might be limited as in London. The opposition reminded the members and the public, that these very petitioners had opened the Smock Alley Theatre in 1733, in order that they might trade against the Aungier Street Theatre, which was built in 1728 by a subscription of the nobility and gentry; in

fact, that they were petitioning against a crime that they themselves had committed. Besides, many of the members of Parliament were subscribers to the new theatre in Crow Street, and they, together with the public approval of the scheme, rendered useless the managers' attempts to destroy it.

About the month of March, 1758,* it was reported that Mr. Barry's agents "were actually seen signing with the proprietors of the music-hall in Crow Street, for their property there, to build a new theatre." Sheridan and Victor were full of anxiety when they heard this rumoured contract, and Victor posted off on April 20, 1758, with intent to dissuade Mr. Barry from so rash an enterprise. He offered Barry the sole proprietorship of the united theatres in Aungier Street and Smock Alley, if he objected to partnership with Sheridan. Any reasonable terms would be granted him, if he would refrain from building a theatre. However, there was no reasoning with the headstrong would-be managers; a new theatre they had planned, and a new theatre they would have, be the loss what it might.

The circumstances under which the new theatre was promoted were as follows. In 1757, Barry, who had tried his strength against Garrick in Romeo, and again in Lear, grew envious of Garrick's superiority of management, and was ambitious, as all great actors are at some periods of their career, to become manager. With this ambition in his mind, he entered into negotiations with the proprietors of the Crow Street Music-hall Dublin, for the purpose of erecting a theatre there. Macklin, who was now released from the duties of vintner and chapman, was quite ready for any new project, and was delighted to join with his friend and countryman Barry

* Genest says 1757.

in the new scheme. Barry was then at the height of his reputation; Macklin had, as it were, to begin the world again; and with these two enthusiastic Irishmen was afterwards joined Woodward, the master of pantomime, who completed the triumvirate.

Macklin now made it his business to gather together a company, and in his house, under the Piazzas in Covent Garden, he was at home to all the tyros of the profession, who were waiting for an opportunity to display their talents on the stage. From ten to twelve o'clock did the veteran sit and give audience to the strangest folk, who imagined they were the coming race of actors and actresses. Foote spread some of his best stories about the town, to torment his old preceptor Macklin; of the aspirant who offered for the Cock in *Hamlet*; the leading *tragédienne* who turned out to be a blackamoor; and the Othello who, when Macklin was listening to his speech before the Senate, "was observed to throw back his left arm with great violence pretty constantly. 'Pray, sir,' says Macklin, 'keep back your left arm a little more; you are now, consider, addressing the Senate, and the *right hand* is the one to give grace and energy to your enunciation.' 'Oh, sir,' replied the candidate, very coolly, 'it is only the sleeve of my coat, which I forgot to pin back, as I lost my left arm many years ago on board a man of war.'" With these and many more stories did Foote amuse his hearers. Meanwhile Macklin gathered together his company one by one, and prepared to make a second descent on Dublin.

Before the joint managers, Barry and Macklin, drew up indentures, Macklin gave in a list of parts, which roused Barry to pause on such an agreement. Besides the parts which he was in stage possession of, such as Shylock, Sir Paul Pliant, the Miser, Ben in *Love for Love*,

Sir Gilbert Wrangle, Scrub, Trinculo, etc., he was for articling to play Hamlet, Richard, Macbeth, etc., *occasionally*. Seeing Barry rather surprised at this last proposal, "Not, my dear Spranger," says he, "that I want to take your parts from you, but by way of giving the town *variety*. You shall play Macbeth one night, and I another, and so on, sir, with the rest of the tragic characters. Thus we will throw lights upon one another's performance, and give a bone to the lads of the college, who, after all, form a part of the most critical audience in Europe." Barry remonstrated with him in his most silky and conciliating manner, but Macklin was not easily shaken. Barry unfortunately suggested to Macklin the "risk" of taking up new characters "at his time of life." No sooner were these phrases out of his mouth than Macklin was on fire, his dignity and self-conceit were hurt. There was no *risk;* in his view it was a *certainty*. And "By G——d, sir, let me tell you, I think I shall be able to show the town something they never saw before!" Foote would have mockingly echoed, "Very likely," to this boast of Macklin; but Barry was too wise, and valued the man too well, to break with him altogether. The present engagement, however, was cancelled. Harry Woodward and Barry agreed as joint patentees and managers of the new theatre, and Macklin, through the mediation of a third person, was softened, and allowed himself to be engaged at a large salary, with the option of playing twice a week in any of the comic characters of the list that he had originally handed to Barry.

In the spring of 1757, Macklin went to Ireland along with Barry, who was present at laying the foundation stone of Crow Street Theatre. Macklin stayed in Dublin, discoursing to the builders on the structure of the Greek and Roman theatres, and possibly, in many other more

practical ways, carrying out the plans of Barry and Woodward, who were now in England; Barry having left Ireland in September, 1757, and not returning until the close of the summer of next year, when the theatre was ready to open.

John O'Keeffe remembered the opening of the new theatre, and probably could have told us, if he would, of Macklin roaming about among the foundations, and lecturing the bricklayers and hodmen. "On the site where Crow Street Theatre was built," he writes, "once stood a fabric called the Music-Hall. I recollect seeing this building; the front, with great gates, faced the end of Crow Street, and here Handel had his sublime oratorio performed, he in person presiding. I well remember seeing the bill of Handel's concert on the gate of this hall in 1758." I cannot but think his chronology here is a little doubtful. "Whilst the foundations of Crow Street Theatre were preparing on this spot, I, amongst other boys, Romulus-like, got jumping over them, little thinking that, on the very stage then erecting, would in process of time rise my own fabric of the Castle of Andalusia. Crow Street opened with Cibber's comedy of *She Would and She Would Not.* A man was pressed to death the first night going up the gallery stairs. Woodward was the *Trappanti.*" This is O'Keeffe's account of the new theatre.

The other side were by no means ill prepared. They set their hopes on Digges, Mrs. Ward, a new pantomime, which was coming out from England, and, if possible, they intended to engage Mrs. Fitzhenry as leading lady. Victor arrived in Dublin on October 14, and was obliged to open in honour of the anniversary of his Majesty's coronation on the 22nd. The new theatre, which was to have been completed in the summer, had still several

workmen in it, but, nevertheless, the management had advertised their first performance for October 22. "They opened with the comedy of *She Would and She Would Not; or, The Kind Impostor*, to a house about half full;" and the second night played the *Beggar's Opera*, to a house of less than £20. "This," continues Victor, "brought the managers forward much sooner than they had intended; and when *they* performed, the people must have wanted taste indeed not to have crowded thither."

Mrs. Macklin, who was engaged by Barry and Woodward, died about this time, before she was able to play any part at the new theatre, and at her death Macklin lost a faithful wife and the stage a very capable actress. As soon as decency would permit, Macklin joined his fellow-actors in Dublin; but he soon quarrelled with his friends, and returned to London in 1759. So deep was his quarrel with his former allies, that we find him in a few months in treaty with Victor, to play along with his daughter, at the Smock Alley Theatre, an arrangement which, owing to Miss Macklin's ill health, was never carried out.

The old managers might indeed have made headway against the new theatre, but for a shocking accident that befell some of the company on their way to Ireland. The *Dublin*, Captain White, was driven by stress of weather on the coast of Scotland, where she foundered with all on board. Among the seventy passengers were Theophilus Cibber, Maddox, and other English auxiliaries. "Our loss of *Maddox*," writes poor Victor, "was almost irretrievable, because with our *Harlequin* went the music, and the business, and the plot of the Pantomime; as also, among the geniuses, the man who played on the twelve bells fastened to his head, hands,

and feet, etc." However, the scenery of the pantomime, which came by water from London, arrived in due course; Mr. Digges and Mrs. Ward, the originals of Douglas and Lady Randolph, appeared in Mr. Hume's new tragedy; and the managers continued to struggle against their ill fate and the opposition at Crow Street.

Mrs. Fitzhenry now agreed with the new managers, and this was the final blow to the old managers' hopes. They did indeed make some money out of their benefit nights, but the tide was against them, and the new theatre, if it had done very little for itself, effectually ruined the old houses. In March, 1759, Victor began to renew his correspondence with Macklin, about his coming over with his daughter, but nothing came of it. This last disappointment compelled the managers to close the season; and on April 20 Sheridan and Victor dissolved their company. The actors, headed by Digges, strove in vain to carry on the theatre by themselves, but gave up the attempt after a few unsuccessful performances. As for Victor, he returned to England, after fourteen years' experience of the sweets and bitters of a managerial life, fairly driven from the field by the new management.

Barry and Woodward had now only one rival to dread, namely, Henry Mossop; and for fear he should start in opposition to them, they engaged him for the season 1759–60, at a considerable salary. The name of Henry Mossop is scarcely so well remembered as it deserves to be, seeing that he was at this time, in popular estimation, the rival of Garrick, playing, under his management, such parts as Richard, Zanga, and Horatio in the *Fair Penitent*, regularly, and on occasions, Macbeth, Wolsey, and Othello. Perhaps never in England has there been a time when the stage was so wealthy in tragedians of the first rank, and never was any theatre outside London

so bravely manned, as when Barry and Mossop alternated leading parts on the boards of the Crow Street Theatre in 1759–60. Though Mossop is almost forgotten, he lives in the memory of some of us as a man of misfortune, an actor, who, by his own undisciplined life, and through his senseless vanity and conceit, brought himself from the highest pinnacle of fame and good fortune, to miserable poverty, despair, and a wretched death-bed. Both the man and the actor are important in connection with the subject on hand, and some short account of Henry Mossop will not be out of place.

He was born in 1729, was the son of the Rector of Tuam, and was educated at Dublin, first at a grammar school in Digges Street, and afterwards at Trinity College. It is said that he was intended for the Church, but he made his election for the stage, and through the influence of an old schoolfellow, Francis Gentleman, then a member of Sheridan's stock company, received an invitation to appear at the Smock Alley Theatre in 1749. He was announced to appear on November 28 of that year, in the part of Zanga, in Dr. Young's tragedy of *The Revenge*. "This character," says Mr. R. W. Lowe, in an interesting sketch of Mossop, "was most judiciously chosen for Mossop's first appearance. It is one of strong passion, with little subtlety of characterization, but with an abundance of striking effects; and it is eminently suited to a young actor who has fire and passion, but whose method is unformed. This was precisely Mossop's position, and he played the part with such beautiful wildness, and with occasional flashes of such brilliant genius, as clearly indicated his future greatness." He was an immediate success, and, supported by his fellow-collegian, he played Richard and other characters, so much to the mind of the audiences, that at the end of

the season the managers found themselves £2000 more in pocket than in any preceding year.

Unfortunately, no sooner had Mossop made his success, than his unconscionable vanity and self-sufficiency began to stand in his way, and he quarrelled with Sheridan, the first note of offence having been sounded by the manager saying that the white satin, puckered, in which he dressed Richard III., had a most coxcombly appearance. Nothing would do but his leaving Sheridan, and he appeared in England on September 26, 1751, in Richard III. He remained at Drury Lane, playing every season—except 1755–56, when he played in Dublin under Victor and Sowdon's management—until in 1759–60 he was engaged by Barry and Woodward for the Crow Street Theatre.

Never had tragedies been produced in such a style of magnificence, and we learn that "the mere guards in *Coriolanus* cost £3 10*s.* per night, and the guards and chorus-singers in *Alexander*, £8." At the end of the season, however, Mossop, to the managers' chagrin, informed them that he was going to start as manager on his own account. In vain they offered him the enormous salary of £1000 to remain with them, "'*Aut Cæsar, aut nullus.*' There should be but one theatre in Ireland, and he would be at the head of it."

Mossop entered on his career as manager in November, 1760, opening with *Venice Preserved*, the part of Pierre being played by the manager, and Belvidera by poor Mrs. Bellamy, who had left Dublin in the zenith of her fame, to return a haggard, hollow-eyed woman, capable of rousing nothing but the curiosity of the audience. It was a miserable opening enough, and sealed Mrs. Bellamy's fate. "She left Dublin," says Tate Wilkinson, "without a single friend to regret her loss. What a

change from the days of her youth! and, as an actress of note, her name never more ranked in any theatre, nor did she ever again rise in public estimation." Mossop, however, was somewhat more successful after this, and, his cause being espoused by the Countess of Brandon, who made it her peculiar charge to fill his theatre, there was often money in the treasury. But what the countess brought to Mossop by her patronage, he lost with interest over the gaming-table, and many are the stories of the straits in which the management found itself, and the tricks adopted by the actors to obtain their salaries. Such a management could only come to one end, but for the time, though it is doubtful if Mossop ever made much more than his expenses, he managed to beat his adversaries from the field. Woodward left Barry in 1762, and Barry himself gave up the theatre in 1767, when Mossop took both the houses. The public fancy, however, grew fickle, and the audiences left Mossop in 1770, to follow Dawson, who reopened a little opposition theatre in Capel Street, which had been closed for many years. In 1771 Mossop left Dublin, bankrupt in body and estate. He hung about in London, a wreck of his former self, too proud to ask Garrick for an engagement. The smart eagle-eyed Zanga dragged on a weary existence, dejected, emaciated, and broken down, until in November, 1773, he was found dead in his bed at his lodgings in the Strand, with fourpence-halfpenny in his pocket.

Poor Mossop must have been a great tragedian in his prime, and a worthy rival of the greater Garrick. Thomas Davies speaks of his fine full-toned voice, the warmth and passion of his sentiment, and his excellence in parts of turbulence, rage, regal tyranny, and sententious gravity. He seems to have relied greatly on study, and

not, like Barry, upon inspiration and physical power, and there is extant a speech of Wolsey, one of Mossop's parts, minutely marked by himself with his own business and directions. His chief fault as an actor, on which Churchill, Garrick's panegyrist, remarks with such insistence, was his stiffness and over-deliberation both in speech and action. The phrase "Mossop's minute-guns" expresses, in the language of the wits, the tendency to a too syllabic utterance that undoubtedly marked his elocution. Had he been more reasonable in his conduct of life, and less eaten up by vanity and conceit, he might have lived to rival Garrick in the memory of men, and to be remembered now as an actor of great achievement, rather than a man with a miserable history.

To return, however, to the part played by Macklin himself in the annals of the Irish stage. Since his last visit to Ireland, Macklin had married a second time, his wife being a Chester lady, Miss Elizabeth Jones, to whom he was married on September 10, 1759. He did not return to Dublin until the season 1763–4, when he agreed with Mossop to play against his old friend Barry, with whom, it would appear, Sheridan was in partnership, and we find him writing to his daughter on November 18, 1763, of the state of affairs in Dublin. "Never," he writes, "were there greater theatrical contests than at present, nor were parties among the ladies higher, insomuch that they distinguish themselves by the names of *Barryists* and *Mossopians*. The contention is between Barry and Sheridan on the one part, and Mossop and Sowdon on the other; and between *Dancer* and Abington—the other women are neglected."

In this season Macklin brought out his *True-Born Irishman*, of which we shall say more hereafter. He now resided in Drumcondra Lane, and was greatly

sought after by stage aspirants, and many of the new actors and actresses, during these years, were pupils of the veteran actor. In the season 1763–4, the celebrated Ann Catley made her appearance at the Smock Alley Theatre. She became a pupil of Macklin—sent to him, maybe, by her lover, Sir Francis Delaval—and she made her *début* in Ireland under his auspices. We can gather the theatrical news of the time, from the following characteristic letter of Macklin to his daughter, dated Dublin, February 21, 1764 :—

"Dublin, February 21, 1764.

"DEAR POLL,

"Yours of the 28th of January, I received some time ago, and this instant that of the 16th instant ; and am glad to find that even the expectation of a new farce from me, or the hopes of seeing me in London, to play for your benefit, has had sufficient influence on you to make you punctual in answering my letter. As to lending you a *new farce*, I cannot pay so ill a compliment to you, the public, or my own fame, as to send you one that I had not been nice about ; nay, rather more so than if it had been for my own benefit or emolument as an author. Your character has been nicely conducted hitherto, even in your profession, as well as in that of real life ; and I hope you will scorn to offer the public a piece merely to fill your galleries or your houses. No, you have been nicely conducted, I say, hitherto ; continue it even about your benefits.

"I have always loved the conscious worth of a good action more than the profit that would arise from a mean or a bad one ; and, depend upon it, there is a wealth in that way of thinking, and I feel the value of it at this instant, and in every vicissitude of my life, but particularly in those of the adverse kind. Had it been in my power to have sent you a piece worthy of your might and fame, be assured I would, but it was not in my power. I have written a great deal this winter, but I find the more I write and the older I grow, the harder I am to be pleased. I do not know

whether I told you in my last that I am reduced in my sustenance entirely to fish, herbage puddings, or spoon meat, not being able to chew any meat harder than a French *bouille*. And now I have told you, what am I the better? But old age and invalids think all their friends are obliged to attend to their infirmities. I am mightily glad to think that your house will be tolerable, at all events; for I would not have you have a bad one for more than the value of it. Pray send me word what you think of taking for your benefit, and your day, as soon as ever it is fixed. Do not miss a post, and send me an exact account of the fate of 'Midas.' You are the worst correspondent in the world; you sent me no account of Miss Davis's illness, and of Miss Brent's; nor the causes or theatrical consequences; nor of Miss Poitier's engagement, Miss Haughton's leaving the stage, Miss Bellamy's promotion to infamy with Calcraft—all this is news—and such-like; and all the theatrical *tittle tattle* and *squibble squabble*. With us, Miss Catley is with child, is in great vogue for her singing, and draws houses, and has been of great service to Mossop.

"My *True-Born Scotchman* is not yet come out, but it is highly admired both by the actors and some ladies and gentlemen of the first taste and fashion, to whom I have read it, for its satire, characters, language, moral, and fable; and indeed I think well of it myself, but not so well as they do.

"On Monday, the 5th of March, I think it will be out. I have just read the *Philaster* that was done at Drury Lane; it is a lamentable thing. Oh, I had like to have forgot! The ship by which you sent the box is not yet come in. Pray, in your writing, never write *couldn't*, *shan't*, *wouldn't*, nor any abbreviation whatever. It is vulgar, rude, ignorant, unlettered, and disrespectful: *could not*, *shall not*, etc., is the true writing. Nor never write M. Macklin. Pray who is M.? It is the highest ill-breeding even to abbreviate *any* word, but particularly a name; besides the unintelligibility.

"Pray how does this look? 'I am, sr., yr. mt. obt. um'ble sevt.' Mind always write your words at length, and never make the vile apologies in your letters about being '*greatly*

hurried with business;' or, '*and must now conclude, as the post is this instant going out.*' Then why did you not begin sooner? You see, I am nothing with you if not critical; and so at full length,

"I am, my dear,

"Your most affectionate

"And anxious father,

"CHARLES MACKLIN.

"P.S.—Your account that you are in health and spirits rejoices me. I never was better in health or content. If I can contrive it, I shall be over with you, but do not depend on anybody but yourself."

The following statement of accounts, too, said, by Kirkman, to be taken from Mr. Macklin's memorandum-book, is of considerable interest. It is to be noticed that the *Beggar's Opera* seems to have been revived this season with considerable profit, and it is said Mr. Macklin played Peachum with success. I do not exactly understand upon what principle Macklin's moiety is calculated, but the document as it stands, even without the key, throws considerable light on Macklin's popularity, both as actor and playwright, as may be seen by glancing at the receipts of February 6, December 22, and December 2.

SMOCK ALLEY THEATRE.

		The receipt of the theatre.	Macklin's moiety.
1763.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Nov. 9	The Refusal, and True-Born Irishman	68 8 3	14 4 1½
,, 14	The Beggar's Opera	74 11 9	17 5 10½
,, 18	The Beggar's Opera	74 11 9	17 5 10½
,, 21	The Revenge; True-Born Irishman	83 8 4	21 14 2
,, 23	The Merchant of Venice, and Saunders, Wire Dancer ...	82 16 5	21 8 2½

		The receipt of the theatre.			Macklin's moiety.		
1763.		£	*s.*	*d.*	£	*s.*	*d.*
Nov. 25	The Beggar's Opera	93	10	11	26	15	5½
,, 28	Double Dealer; True-Born Irishman	76	15	1	18	7	6½
Dec. 1	The Beggar's Opera	45	16	6	2	18	3
,, 2	Julius Cæsar, Alderman ...	100	0	0	30	2	7½
,, 7	The Brothers, Alderman ...						
,, 9	The Beggar's Opera; True-Born Irishman	95	0	2	27	10	1
,, 22	By command, Lord Lieutenant, Revenge and True-Born Irishman	113	2	0	36	11	6
,, 23	The Beggar's Opera, Saunders, Wire Dancer	86	14	5	23	7	2½
1764.							
Jan. 2	Old Bachelor; True-Born Irishman	40	2	9		1	4½
,, 6	The Beggar's Opera, Wire Dancing	64	7	0	12	3	6
,, 20	The Beggar's Opera	97	13	3	28	16	7
,, 27	Opera and Wire	91	16	9½	25	18	4½
Feb. 6	Merchant of Venice; Love à-la-Mode	121	6	8	40	13	4
,, 10	Beggar's Opera, Wire Dancing ...	79	0	7	19	10	3½
,, 13	Refusal; Love à-la-Mode ...	63	8	7	11	14	3½
,, 17	Opera	74	17	2	17	18	7
,, 26	Comus; Love à-la-Mode ...	73	3	10	16	11	9

It was not to be expected that two such self-opinionated men as Macklin and Mossop would work in harmony for any length of time, and consequently it is not surprising to learn, that they were the plaintiff and defendant in a lawsuit, arising out of the profits of the theatre in the past season, in which, Mossop having no money, Macklin had the satisfaction of getting a verdict, but nothing more substantial. Macklin, in 1764, went back to England, where he had "the honourable distinction of instructing H.R.H. the late Duke of York in the science of acting." Several plays were represented at the Privy Gardens by eminent and distinguished

amateurs under Mr. Macklin's direction. "But," as Kirkman eloquently says, "in the zenith of his distinction, and whilst he was basking in the sunshine of royalty, and enjoying the beneficence of the noble duke, Mr. Macklin's prosperity received a mortal wound, and he had to deplore with the nation the sudden death of his royal patron."

Under these circumstances, Macklin entered into an engagement with Barry, who was now (1765–6) deserted by Woodward, and produced *The Man of the World*, under the title of *The True-Born Scotchman*. Macklin acted on the same terms at Crow Street as he had at the Smock Alley Theatre, and probably with more profit to himself; for we find on one occasion, when *The Merchant of Venice* and *Love à-la-Mode* were played, by command of Lord Hertford, Macklin's moiety amounted to no less than £57 1*s*. 0½*d*. After this season Macklin spent the remainder of the year in study, and, we are told, in the composition of dramatic works. What these were it is impossible to say. The next year Barry left Dublin, and Mossop, as we have said, took both the theatres.

Macklin did not visit Dublin again until 1770. He had been playing in Liverpool and Leeds, and arrived at Dublin on November 11. He first played at the little theatre in Capel Street. This theatre was built by a man named Stretch to exhibit his puppet show. It was known by the name of "Stretch's Show," and O'Keeffe says that when very young he much delighted in the puppets. The house was afterwards hired by Dawson and Robert Mahon. "The stage was deep, and it had pit, boxes, lattices, and two galleries, but no greenroom, the former company (the puppets) not having required one." The new company consisted, however, of flesh

and blood actors, to whom a greenroom was a necessity; they therefore hired the back parlour of an adjacent grocer's shop. The company consisted, among others, of Macklin; Thomas Holcroft, actor and prompter, afterwards a successful London playwright; Philip Glenville, a pupil of Macklin; Miss Ambrose, and Miss Leeson, afterwards Mrs. William Lewis, also his pupils; and Miss Younge, afterwards Mrs. Pope. Macklin brought with him his own pieces in which he played, and a new tragedy which no one ever saw. For this tragedy he had brought some splendid dresses, made by the dressmaker of the Opera House in the Haymarket, which Dawson and Mahon bought up and used for the grand procession in Garrick's "Stratford Jubilee," so they were not wasted.

In March, 1771, Dawson removed his company from the Capel Street to the Crow Street Theatre. Here Macklin revised *The True-Born Scotchman*, instructing Miss Younge in the part of Lady Rodolpha, which she acted with success. At this time Miss Leeson was under his tuition, and she accompanied Macklin to Limerick and Cork, where he carried out advantageous engagements. O'Keeffe says that "both in Limerick and Cork the drama and actors were in very high estimation. If a play, in its first representation in London, should be driven from the stage, and an actor fail in a trial part, and thereby be neglected, such play and such actors were never brought either to Cork or Limerick." The performers were generally rewarded by a free benefit, which produced them three or four hundred pounds. Garrick gave considerable offence by never leaving Dublin to play at Cork or Limerick, but most of the other leading actors and actresses paid a visit to these places. Outside Cork and Limerick the drama seems to

have been little appreciated or understood, and there does not seem at any time to have been a flourishing provincial stage in Ireland.

The following playbill is too much of a curiosity not to be printed at length. It tells us something of the style of company that went on tour with Shakespeare in provincial Ireland in the eighteenth century. Although one would be rash in vouching for its genuineness, nevertheless, even as a parody or burlesque, it is probably as near to nature, in its way, as are the details of the management of Mr. Vincent Crummles at the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth.

"Bill of Kilkenny Theatre Royal

By his Majesty's Co. of Comedians,

The last night, because the Co. go to-morrow to Waterford.

On Saturday, May 14, 1793,

Will be performed, by command of several respectable people in this learned metropolis, for the benefit of Mr. Kearns

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET.

Originally written and composed by the celebrated Dan Hayes of Limerick, and inserted in Shakespeare's works.

HAMLET, by Mr. Kearns (being his first appearance in that character), who, between the acts, will perform several solos on the patent bagpipes, which play two tunes at the same time.

OPHELIA, by Mrs. Prior, who will introduce several favourite airs in character, particularly 'The Lass of Richmond Hill,' and 'We'll all be Unhappy Together,' from the Rev. Mr. Dibdin's 'Oddities.'

The parts of the King and Queen, by the direction of the Rev. Father O'Callaghan, will be omitted, as too immoral for any stage.

POLONIUS, the comical politician, by a young gentleman, being his first appearance in public.

The Ghost, the Gravedigger, and Laertes, by Mr. Sampson, the great London comedian.

The characters to be dressed in Roman shapes.

To which will be added an Interlude, in which will be introduced several sleight-of-hand tricks by Professor Hurst.

The whole to conclude with the farce of

MAHOMET THE IMPOSTOR.

Tickets to be had of Mr. Kearns at the sign of the Goat's Beard in Castle Street.

*** The value of the tickets as usual will be taken (if required) in candles, bacon, soap, butter, cheese, etc., as Mr. Kearns wishes in every particular to accommodate the public.

N.B.—No person whatsoever will be admitted into the boxes without shoes or stockings."

Passing from this eccentric document to more trustworthy and important matters, we must notice, in concluding this somewhat spasmodic account of the Irish stage, Macklin's last visit to Dublin in 1785. He was now at least eighty-six years of age, and yet the then manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, Mr. Daly, was so assured of his worth and popularity as an actor, that he was able to offer him the munificent salary of £50 a night, to which was added a clear benefit. Seldom, if ever, in the history of the stage, has an actor of these years gone through so arduous a task as that which Macklin undertook. He played Shylock and Sir Archy one night, and on another occasion, Sir Pertinax. On August 22, his benefit night, he was advertised to appear in these two last characters, and as soon as the doors of the house were opened, it was thronged in every part. Everything went well until the middle of the second act, when, unfortunately, he was taken suddenly ill, and had to be assisted off the stage. This was the

first time his memory showed any symptoms of decay, and a sympathetic audience were ready to accept a substitute through the rest of the performance. In a few days he was sufficiently recovered, and the indomitable old actor was again delighting the public in his favourite parts. He always seemed to enjoy acting in his native city, and some of his most hopeful years were passed in Dublin, playing to audiences of his own countrymen. At one time he had intended to live in retirement there; and as early as 1771 he writes to his son, "About the latter end of this month I shall remove my goods to Dublin, where I intend to settle for the remainder of my life; nor shall I in all probability return even as a visitor to England for some years, if ever." These hopes were, as we know, not to be realized. Necessity compelled him to return to England, and he was never more than a sojourner in his native city of Dublin.

CHAPTER VIII.

MACKLIN THE PLAYWRIGHT.

Although the education of Macklin was, as we have seen, somewhat neglected in his early youth, there is no reason to believe the stories that exist about his learning to read at the age of thirty-five. There is evidence that he was at a school for some considerable period. He himself has left notes of reminiscences about his schoolmaster, and we may take it that in his early years he at least learned how to read and write, if nothing more. Macklin, too, was not a man to sit down beneath adverse circumstances and indulge in indolent lamentations. There was a good deal of intellectual pride about the man, and, as he worked his way up in his chosen profession, we gather that he took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves, reading any volumes of history, criticism, and poetry that fell in his way. An absolutely ignorant man, however limitless his self-conceit, would never have hit out the great Piazza scheme. But, on the other hand, this is just the kind of project one would expect, from a self-willed and self-educated man, who, knowing that he had made a wiser use of his spare moments than the men he associated with, and full of knowledge and conceit, burned to impart to the universe some crumbs of the information he had acquired with such difficulty, and to receive in return the homage due to a philosopher and a man of learning.

If we are right in believing that his self-education was gradual, and dated back to the early days of his theatrical life, it is easy to understand his history as a playwright. There was an interval of fifteen years between the productions of *Henry VII.* and *Love à-la-Mode*, and during that time Macklin tried his hand at several dramatic compositions; these were, without exception, failures. It was not until 1759 that he discovered that to write a play something other than mere plot, pen, ink, and paper was required. His earlier attempts are mere sketches, the work of a man who thinks he has only to sit down and knock off a successful drama as he would a note of invitation. And, indeed, Macklin's letters seem far more studied compositions than his earlier dramas. But this, again, is what one would expect from a self-educated, vain man, who knew the stage well, and fancied his literary powers were equal to his acknowledged acting worth. It is not until he rids himself of this notion, and applies to dramatic writing that insight, energy, and painful care that he gave to acting, that he is enabled to produce any composition that is really worthy of criticism.

Macklin's first play was produced in 1746, the year after the Scotch rebellion. Theatrical entertainments were greatly deserted in this time of political excitement; and at Lacy's suggestion Macklin employed himself for six weeks in producing a tragedy entitled *King Henry VII.; or, the Popish Impostor.* It deals with the story of Perkin Warbeck, and, with unconscious humour, introduces him as a Popish impostor at a date when, of course, Protestantism was unknown. The tragedy was performed for six nights at Drury Lane, Macklin playing the part of Huntley. Mrs. Cibber, writing to Garrick about this time, tells him of the straits the theatre is in.

"It is surprising," she says, "that Drury Lane playhouse goes on acting; one night with another they have not received above £40; the actors are paid only three nights a week, though they play every night. But the top stroke of all was Macklin's play! It was entirely new dressed, and no expense saved in the clothes. I shall say nothing of the piece, because you may read it; but be as vain as you will about your playing Bayes, you never made an audience laugh more than *Henry VII.* has done."

Quin had told him all along that his tragedy would never succeed, and when the event justified his prediction, Quin asked him what he thought of his judgment now.

"Why, I think posterity will do me justice," said Macklin.

"I believe they will," retorted Quin; "for your play now is only damned, but posterity will have the satisfaction to know that both play and author met with the same fate."

In the prologue to the piece, written and spoken by Macklin himself, the only excuse put forward for the tragedy was in the first couplet—

> "The temporary piece in haste was writ,
> The six weeks' labour of a puny wit."

The audience, however, very rightly refused to be cajoled by such flimsy excuses, and the play was rightly and speedily damned.

Tragedy having proved somewhat a failure, Macklin's ubiquitous ambition led him to try his hand at satire. Towards the close of the season 1746–7, the reputation of Dr. Hoadley's *Suspicious Husband*, which was produced at Covent Garden, disturbed the noble army of greenroom wits, who fancied they were "thrown at," to use Mr. Cooke's expression, and they retaliated as well

as they could by abusing the play. Macklin, who at that time haunted the Grecian Coffee-house, where a select circle of young Templars held their court, and who was probably welcome in many another similar coterie, thought this a good opportunity to make his mark as a satirist. With this intention he produced a farce entitled *The Suspicious Husband Criticized; or, the Plague of Envy*, which was produced at Drury Lane. Satire, however, was no more successful than tragedy, and the farce was never played a second time.

About this time, too, he wrote a little farce entitled *A Will or no Will; or, a Bone for the Lawyers*, which was played at Mrs. Macklin's benefit, but never afterwards; and in 1748 he produced another farce, called *The Club of Fortune Hunters; or, the Widow Bewitched.* This was played two or three times for Macklin's benefit, but only met with a tolerable reception. These non-successes seem to have daunted Macklin's enthusiasm for dramatic writing, and, with the exception of a dramatic spectacle called *Covent Garden Theatre; or, Pasquin turned Drawcansir*, acted at Covent Garden in 1752, Macklin did nothing in the way of dramatic composition until after ten years, when he produced *Love à-la-Mode.* One cannot but regret, however, that one has to form an opinion of these early dramatic ventures from hearsay, as, with the exception of *Henry VII.; or, the Popish Impostor*, not one of them seems to have been printed. *Henry VII.* was printed, it is said, in 1746, but I have not been able to find a copy of the play.

Love à-la-Mode was the first play written by Macklin that can be chronicled a success. The story of the piece is simple enough, and its action purely conventional and in a sense stagey, but it is a good acting farce full of character and witty dialogue. Although it pretends only

to be a farce, it is indeed a "comedy in little," and far more deserving to be classed in the higher category than many a more pretentious comedy, so-called, of recent years.

Charlotte, a young lady of fortune, has four lovers, Sir Archy MacSarcasm, a Scotchman; Squire Groom, an English country bumpkin; Mr. Mordecai, a Jew; and the hero of the piece, Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan, an Irish soldier. The characters of the men are foreshadowed in their names. We see their methods of love-making, and are amused by their idiosyncrasies in the first act; in the second, Charlotte pretends to lose her fortune, when the three first-named lovers desert her, and she falls into the arms of the chivalrous Irishman, who finds he has married not only a charming mistress, but an heiress as well. Such is the plot, simple, conventional, belonging to the stage ever since the stage was an institution, and only remarkable in this case, for its novel presentment, its capital acting characters, and its smart dialogue.

There is a story of the origin of this piece given by Cooke, who has it from Macklin himself, which is perhaps worth preserving. It is as follows:—

"Some time before going to Ireland on the Crow Street expedition, Barry and Macklin had been spending the evening at a public-house in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, when they were joined by an Irishman who had been some years in the Prussian service, and who from his first appearance attracted their notice. In his person he was near six feet high, finely formed, of a handsome manly face, with a degree of honesty and good humour about him which prejudiced everybody in his favour.

"He happened to sit in the same box where Macklin and Barry sat; and as Barry perfectly understood the Irish character, could tell many agreeable stories in that way, and was, beside, considered as no inconsiderable *humbugger* (a

species of wit very much attached to an Hibernian humorist), he soon scraped an acquaintance with his countrymen, and brought him out in the full blow of self-exhibition."

The Irishman seems to have told the actors all his history in simple-minded honesty, while they, in return, abused his good nature by raillery and practical joking. It does not appear, however, that he had much in common with Sir Callaghan, except that he had been a soldier in the Prussian service; but perhaps he suggested to Macklin the notion of an Irish hero, which at this date was a new one, Irishmen being then invariably pourtrayed on the stage as designing and mercenary fortune-hunters. Macklin was so keen about embodying this chance Irishman as the hero of a comedy, that he instantly communicated his idea to Barry, who was sufficiently pleased with it to offer to play the hero, and sufficiently eager for the piece to be written to wager Macklin a "rump and dozen" that he would not produce a comedy in the course of three months.

"The wager," it is said, "was accepted; and Macklin, according to his own account, produced a comedy of five acts, sketched out in plot and incidents without having all the parts of the dialogue filled up, in the course of six weeks, which Barry was so pleased with that he paid him his wager, Macklin pledging himself, at the same time, to finish it before the end of the season."

Macklin's earlier dramatic ventures had suffered, as we have seen, from hasty writing and scamped workmanship. He had learned at last that the dialogue of a play must be crisp, pointed, and rapid, and he was so far convinced of this as to be able to take the advice of his friends, and cut down his five acts to two.

"His first design was to make it a play of five acts, and he disposed the business of it in this manner. However,

before he brought it before the eye of the public he determined to take advice; and as there was nobody to whom he could with more friendship and propriety address himself than Mr. Murphy, who was, and is, considered as one of our first dramatic writers, he wrote a letter inviting him to dine with him on a certain day, in order to sit in judgment on his comedy.

"This was in the summer of 1760 [this date should be 1759]. Murphy had country lodgings in Kew Lane, and Macklin and his daughter lived upon Richmond Hill. They met two hours before dinner for this purpose, when Macklin began with great gravity to read his piece, first requesting the critic 'to use the pruning-knife, if necessary, with an unsparing hand.' Murphy accordingly called for pen, ink, and paper, and as Macklin read he made his remarks. They had not proceeded long in this manner, when Macklin (who from the beginning was on the tenterhook of expectation) called out, 'Well, sir, come, let's see what you have done?' 'No, sir,' said the other; 'read through, and then I will show you my remarks.' Macklin's impatience could not well brook this delay, and he talked 'of his having a rod over him, and that he should like to have some presentiment of his fate, and not perhaps be d——d altogether.' Murphy remonstrated upon this, and told him 'that as his comedy could not be well judged of till it was entirely read, so his criticism would be imperfect till the whole was equally finished.' 'Well, sir,' said the growling author, 'I have put myself in your power—go on!' He accordingly read through his piece, when Murphy gave the following judgment.

"That he in general approved of the plot, the characters and their appropriate discriminations, but that both plot and characters suffered considerably from being drawn out into *five acts*. From this extension the business lingered, and that *éclat* which would be produced by the bustle and incident of a *two-act-piece* must suffer from a further continuation."

Macklin, author-like, protested against so cruel a decision. He made a long dissertation on comedy

ancient and modern, pleading skilfully, but in vain, for his five acts. Murphy was too much his friend, and too honest a critic, to recant, and insisted on the piece being cut down to a farce. Macklin took his opinion in writing before they parted, determining to think the matter over and consult some of his other critical friends before he took further steps. With this view, he laid his manuscript before Mr. Chetwynd, a mutual friend of Murphy, Foote, Sir Francis Delaval, and Macklin, and a well-known theatrical amateur. Chetwynd, who seems to have possessed common sense as well as learning, gave the same verdict as Murphy, and Macklin, with considerable wisdom and self-denial, turned his five-act comedy into a two-act farce.

The piece was first played at Drury Lane Theatre, on December 12, 1759. It was Macklin's first appearance at Drury Lane for six years. The following was the cast :—

Sir Archy MacSarcasm	*Mr. Macklin.*
Squire Groom	„ *King.*
Beau Mordecai	„ *Blakes.*
Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan	„ *Moody.*
Sir Theodore Goodchild ...	„ *Burton.*
and	
Charlotte	*Miss Macklin.*

As we have said, the characters are well drawn, and we cannot understand how any one, reading the play, could doubt that it would act well. Sir Archy MacSarcasm, though not a character of the weight and force of Sir Pertinax MacSycophant, has his full share of witty lines, and is, indeed, a lighter caricature of the same character—the haughty, avaricious, clever Scotchman. Sir Archy's description of the Squire is at least

good farcical writing. "Why, madam, the Squire is the keenest sportsman in a' Europe: Madam, there is naething comes amiss tull him; he wull fish, or fowl, or hunt—he hunts everything—everything frae the flae i' the blanket to the elephant in the forest." Better still is his humorous lament about the law, which has added a phrase to an Englishman's vocabulary that seems as though it would outlast the law itself. "Oh, Sir, ye dinna ken the law—the law is a sort of hocus pocus science, that smiles in yer face while it picks yer pocket; and the glorious uncertainty of it is of mair use to the professors than the justice of it."

The quarrel between Sir Archy, with "his abominable Scot's accent, and his grotesque visage almost buried in snuff," and the bold boisterous cavalier Sir Callaghan, on the antiquity of their respective families, is almost worthy of Sheridan, and certainly deserves to be quoted as one of Macklin's happiest dramatic scenes. The quarrel arises out of a letter which the Irishman has written to Charlotte's father, and which he is reading to Sir Archy. In it he makes an unhappy allusion to the antiquity of his own family, and then proceeds—

"You see, Sir Archy, I give him a rub, but by way of a hint about my family, because why, do you see, Sir Theodore is my uncle, only by my mother's side, which is a little upstart family that came in vid one Strongbow but t'other day — lord, not above six or seven hundred years ago; whereas my family, by my father's side, are all the true ould Milesians, and related to the O'Flaherty's, and O'Shaughnesses, and the MacLauchlins, and the O'Donnaghans, O'Callaghans, O'Geogaghans, and all the tick blood of the nation—and I myself, you know, am an O'Brallaghan, which is the ouldest of them all.

"*Sir A.* Ay, ay! I believe you are o' an auncient family, Sir Callaghan, but ye are oot in ae point.

"*Sir C.* What is that, Sir Archy?

"*Sir A.* Whar ye said ye were as auncient as ony family i' the tree kingdoms.

"*Sir C.* Faith, then, I said nothing but truth.

"*Sir A.* Hut, hut, hut awa' man, hut awa'! ye mauna say that; what the deel, consider oor families i' the North. Why, ye o' Ireland, sir, are but a colony frae us, an ootcast! a mere ootcast, and as such ye remain tull this hour.

"*Sir C.* I beg your pardon, Sir Archy, that is the Scotch account, which, you know, never speaks truth, because it is always partial; but the Irish history, which must be the best, because it was written by an Irish poet of my own family, one Shemus Thurlough Shannaghan O'Brallaghan, and he says, in his chapter of genealogy, that the Scotch are all Irishmen's bastards.

"*Sir A.* Hoo, sir! bastards! Do ye mak us illegeetemate, illegeetemate, sir?

"*Sir C.* Faith, I do—for the youngest branch of our family, one MacFergus O'Brallaghan, was the very man that went from Carrickfergus and peopled all Scotland with his own hands; so that, my dear Sir Archy, you must be bastards of course, you know.

"*Sir A.* Hark ye, Sir Callaghan, though yer ignorance and vanity wad mak conquerors and ravishers o' yer auncesters, and harlots and sabines o' oor mithers—yet ye sall prove, sir, that their issue are a' the children o' honour.

"*Sir C.* Hark'e, hark'e, Sir Archy, what is that ye mentioned about ignorance and vanity?

"*Sir A.* Sir, I denoonce ye baith ignorant and vain, and mak yer maist o't.

"*Sir C.* Faith, sir, I can make nothing of it, for they are words I don't understand, because they are what no gentleman is used to; and therefore you must unsay them.

"*Sir A.* Hoo, sir! Eat my words? A North Briton eat his words?

"*Sir C.* Indeed you must, and this instant eat them.

"*Sir A.* Ye sall eat first a piece o' this weapont. [*Draws.*

"*Sir C.* Poo, poo, Sir Archy, put up, put up—this is no proper place for such work; consider, drawing a sword is

a very serious piece of business, and ought always to be done in private. We may be prevented here ; but if you are for a little of that fun, come away to the right spot, my dear.

"*Sir A.* Nae equivocation, sir ; dinna ye think ye hae gotten Beau Mordecai to cope wi'. Defend yersel', for, by the sacred honour o' Saint Andrew, ye sall be responsible for makin' us illegeetemate, sir, illegeetemate.

"*Sir C.* Then by the sacred crook of Saint Patrick, you are a very foolish man to quarrel about such a trifle. But since you have a mind for a tilt, have at you, my dear, for the honour of the sod. Oho ! my jewel ! never fear us, you are as welcome as the flowers of May. [*They fight.*"

It is difficult to understand how Garrick, on reading a piece with so humorous a scene in it, could have expressed disapproval, but it is said that he declared it would not do, consenting, however, to its representation if the author greatly desired it. It is not to be supposed that Macklin was greatly depressed by Garrick's unfavourable judgment, but it had this irritating effect, that their players, taking the cue from Garrick, publicly foretold its approaching destruction, and had any one but Macklin been stage-manager, the piece could never have succeeded. As it was, thanks to careful drilling and his own clever performance of Sir Archy, the piece was capitally received, and ran for several nights. It is related that its popularity even reached the ears of George II., who had for some time discontinued his appearance at theatres, and that, hearing so much talk of *Love à-la-Mode,* "he sent for the manuscript, and commanded an old Hanoverian officer to read it to him. This person spent eleven weeks in misrepresenting the author's meaning. The German was totally void of humour, and was, besides, not well acquainted with the English language. The King,

however, expressed great satisfaction at the Irishman getting the better of his rivals, and gaining the young lady."

There was some slight objection to the farce at first, on the ground that the author exalted an Irishman above an Englishman in honour and valour. And there is a pamphlet in the British Museum, formerly the property of Toms's Coffee-house, in Devereux Court, criticizing the farce from the point of view of an angry Scot. The author naively informs us he has only been in England a fortnight, and goes on to suggest that the farce is "the impotent effort of the hard-bound brains of a low plagiary, whose memory is filled with the shreds and ill-chosen scraps of other men's wit." But this sort of thing was soon voted down as national prejudice, and English audiences welcomed a stage Irishman who was something other than a cruel caricature of human nature. Sir Callaghan is, we believe, one of the earliest Irish stage heroes, the legitimate ancestor of Sir Lucius O'Trigger and many another honest ridiculous fellow of less note.

How carefully considered were all his characters, and how greatly in earnest Macklin was in his dramatic writing, may be gathered from the following letter, addressed at a later date to Mr. Quick, respecting his performance of Beau Mordecai. This letter, as it seems to me, evinces serious thought upon all stage matters which is of especial interest and value from being the result of long experience. The letter, too, is characteristic of the writer. It is polemical, crude, wanting in tact, and pedantic, but, at the same time, clear, just, and well considered in its terms and substance. It is copied verbatim from the *Monthly Mirror* of January, 1798, and begins without further preface thus:

"In every profession or special community there exists a moral principle of kindness and brotherhood. This principle seems to me to be indispensable, and the man who departs from it cannot be deemed a true brother.

"No profession can be more obliged to observe this principle, in the exercise of it, than actors, as the amicably and precisely settling at rehearsals what each actor in a scene means to do in his character, how he will do it, and the faithfully executing that, are the only means that can methodize and carry the art of actors into a resemblance of the characters and actions that the poet intended.

"When you first acted the part of Mordecai in *Love à-la-Mode*, you thought yourself so young in the profession of an actor, and so inexperienced, as to suffer yourself to be directed by the author, how to dress, look, deport, and speak that character, for your acting of which you had his thanks, his praise, and his interest to get you retained in Covent Garden Theatre.

"But such is the nature of your improvement in your profession, in that part in particular, that you neither dress it, look it, speak it, nor deport it as you were instructed, nor as you used to do; nay, you do not even speak the words or meaning of the author. In short, friend Quick, you have made it quite a different character from what the author intended it, and from what it appeared when you first acted it, and for some years after.

"Actors often overrate their consequence in various instances. One mark of that disorder is that they care not whom they distress or injure in a scene, so they gratify their own overbearing vanity and avarice of fame. Another mark is that they are above being informed by their fellows —they look upon it as an insult to their understanding, their fame, merit, and consequence. This is a false principle; the true one is that an actor is never too wise nor too old to be instructed, as the nature of his profession is to know all that passes in the mind of man, with its influence upon the body from the cradle to the grave, all which he is to imitate, by looks, tones, station, attitude, gait, and gesture.

"Now, it is probable that no one actor has studied all

these signs, or, if he has, that he has not retained them all ; therefore he may probably be informed sometimes even by an inferior brother.

"You, sir, seem to be so high in your profession as to act in what manner you please, in a sense, without considering how your acting affects the person in the scene with you. That is no affair of mine, unless it interferes with me as a brother—in that case I am as tenacious to be relieved as you are to offend ; and I think I am justifiable when I resolve that no actor shall indulge his consequence or his policy, by preventing the good effects of a scene, that I, by fair brotherly means, am endeavouring to produce. This prevention you have very often effected in *Love à-la-Mode*, and likewise in the trifling scene that you have with me in the *Merchant of Venice*, though often requested civilly to alter your conduct in it. I shall request of the manager that your scenes in *Love à-la-Mode* may be rehearsed before that farce is acted again, to the end that the character of Beau Mordecai may be restored to what it was intended to be, to the spirit and humour that you used to enliven it with. And that you may recollect distinctly what the character and manner are, I take the liberty of giving you the following outlines of each.

"The character is an egregious coxcomb who is striving to be witty ; at the top of dress, with an awkward fancy of his own, so as to be as ridiculous and as badly matched or sorted as such a fellow ignorant of propriety can be.

"His manner is very lively—singing, conceited, dancing—throwing out himself, body, voice, and mind, as much as conceit and impudence and ignorance can effect.

"Instead of which, sir, you turn him into a fellow that neither sings, capers, nor flutters ; his voice, his utterance, his action, his everything, is shrunk into nothing but a dulness that has no effect but a flattening every part of the farce that he is concerned in ; all which is in your power to avoid, or you would never have been troubled with the part nor with this letter.

"Should any part of this letter carry the mask of impropriety of any kind, be assured I did not intend it ; my only

end in the expostulation is to carry on business with unity and fairness. Show it to any of our brethren—I shall implicitly submit to their determination; but if we cannot carry on business with mutual harmony, we must avoid meeting in a scene as often as the service of the theatre will admit of such an indulgence.

"I am, Sir,

"With great respect and good wishes,

"Your friend and fellow-actor,

"C. M."

The error of exalting the Irishman to the place of hero, which offended some ultra-loyal and patriotic theatre-goers in England, was perhaps the chief virtue of the piece in Dublin. Macklin produced the play there in the winter of 1762, with a really remarkable cast. Barry as Sir Callaghan, Woodward as Squire Groom Messink as Mordecai, and himself Sir Archy. Barry made a great hit in the Irish hero. "It was partly the character of the player himself in his convivial moments," as Mr. Cooke says, and the whole performance so delighted the town that "they followed it with unabating curiosity for a whole winter as one of their never-failing dishes of entertainment."

Love à-la-Mode became the rage in England as well as Ireland, and we find in Tate Wilkinson's Memoirs a letter from David Garrick, endeavouring to tempt Wilkinson to play Sir Archy, and asking him "to study the part in all haste and secretly," in order that they might spring a surprise on Macklin by suddenly producing his piece. This plot, however, came to nothing; but Macklin had at various times considerable trouble with strolling companies, who chose to act *Love à-la-Mode* without the author's permission. The following letter, written by Macklin on May 18, 1771, to his solicitor, is at least

interesting as bearing on the condition of theatricals in the provinces at this time :—

"DEAR SIR,

"By the paper enclosed [a playbill] in this letter, you will find that I must again call the law to my aid in order to maintain my preclusive right to the property of *Love à-la-Mode*. The offender is one Whitley, whose christian name I know not. He is the master of a Strolling Company, and generally acts at Manchester, Derby, and Leicester, so that an acquaintance at any of those places might inform me of his christian name, should it be necessary to the filing of a bill, or, were I to write a letter to him, I suppose that would draw it from him.

"The constitution of these Strolling Companies is that one man generally finds cloaths and scenes, for which he has *four shares* of the profits. Every performer is a sharer. The number of performances about sixteen or eighteen. The person who provides the cloaths and scenes is deemed the master of the company, who makes all contracts for rents, etc., and is responsible for all expenses and contingencies of every kind incidental to the undertaking. This is the character Whitley stands in."

* * * * *

Intent on the destruction of the said Whitley, Macklin went down to Leicester, and indited a dignified *ultimatum* to the offending manager, intimating that if he did not give up the performance of *Love à-la-Mode*, and promise never to play it in future, he would invoke the powers of the law against him and every individual member of his company. To this Whitley, who was a clever rogue, having been bred an attorney, and acquired a fine literary style, sent the following delightful reply :

"*To* MR. CHARLES MACKLIN.

"Leicester, May 26, 1771.

"SIR,

"If misconception had not hurried you into a labyrinth of error, if your judgment was not jaundiced by false, mean, wicked agents such as *Connor* and *Kenna*,—I think you could not readily resolve to heap any kind of expense upon people totally innocent of intentional transgression.

"If a man made invasion on my wardrobe, and sold a coat of mine in Monmouth Street, and an harmless, innocent man here bought it and paid honestly for it, I could not punish him for wearing it; nor, in the judicious eye, would it appear that he invaded my property; nor could any law condemn him for it; but this, and much more of rational inference that might serve to convince, I shall waive and acquiesce with your own propositions, as I would rather heal than irritate grievances; though, indeed, sir, I am as well persuaded I can exculpate myself as I am that the sun moves the earth, or the soul of man is immortal.

"I shall not recriminate, and though I must perceive the palpable pregnancy of some illiberal and unjust insinuations in your letter, as I am conscious of my own integrity, I cannot make the application to myself, but reply, *qui capit ille facit.*

"I know that reason is the rock on which the law is, or ought to be, founded, and that unerring guide tells me that I have not invaded your literary property, or offended any part or parcel of the law, in looking on the exhibition, or by not preventing the performance of your farce. But, sir, my nature and education soar above the concession of wrongs. I should shudder at the shadow of an unprovoked injury; and, as I am impatient of bearing insult, am ever cautious of affronting; therefore, as a gentleman, born and bred above meanness, I shall make you this concession—that I will submit my conduct to the arbitration of any two sensible, honest men, and, in the *interim*, to wipe away your anxiety, solemnly promise that, as it disturbs your peace, *Love à-la-Mode* shall never be performed in my company without your concurrence.

"Sir, were I single in this conflict, I could fearless face every impending consequence; but as the debate is complicated, and you, like a gentleman, offer the alternative, I, as a gentleman, and the parent and protector of my people, do embrace the alternative, and shall be proud to meet Mr. Macklin for the future as a friend.

"Consider, sir, the noble mind is above seeking for servile submission, and the virtuous mind too exalted to make it.

"I am, with respect, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"JAMES WHITLEY."

Whether or not Macklin was taken in by this bit of transpontine impudence, one cannot say. Perhaps the bombastic style of the manager tickled his vanity. Anyhow, he was content to accept his promise, and did not give his solicitors orders to file a bill.

The next play that Macklin produced was *The Married Libertine.* This comedy was first played at Covent Garden on January 28, 1761, Macklin playing Lord Belleville, the libertine, and his daughter a madcap part, evidently written to suit her abilities. The piece is spoken of as having been well written and carefully planned, but it was not a success. The plot, to modern ears, sounds very objectionable, and, as the play was never printed, we cannot learn how far the dialogue was worthy of the author of *Love à-la-Mode.* There was a determined opposition to the piece, partly on the ground that Lord Belleville was intended for a portrait of a well-known nobleman, then living. There seems no reason to believe that this was so. In spite of a strong and continued opposition, Macklin, with the assistance of an Irish party that rallied round him, was enabled to play the piece for the nine nights necessary to entitle him to his three benefits.

In 1763, Macklin produced in Dublin a very successful play, entitled *The True-Born Irishman.* He himself played with great spirit a hospitable Irish country gentleman of unaffected manners. "The design of the piece," says Cooke, "was to ridicule the affectation of the Irish fine ladies of fashion on their return from England (where they are never supposed to reside above a month or two), aping the pronunciation and manners of the English, in contempt of their own native dialect and customs. To this was added the character of a *prejudiced* Englishman, who saw everything in Ireland with so jaundiced an eye 'that the fish was too *new* for him, the claret too light, and the women too fair.'"

Count Mushroom, the Englishman, was meant to ridicule Mr. Hamilton (Single-speech Hamilton), then the secretary to the Earl of Halifax, the Lord Lieutenant. Ryder played the part, and it was recognized as a strong likeness. Both parties, however, applauded the play, the opposition from pure delight, the Government party, among whom was Hamilton himself, to show that their withers were unwrung. Some years afterwards Macklin attempted to produce the piece in England, but it was only acted for one night. The mixed idiom of the brogue and the cockney, the personal ridicule of an Irish Secretary, had no charms for an English audience, and the piece was damned at Covent Garden November 28, 1767, in spite of a very excellent cast. Macklin took this defeat with great philosophy, saying in his downright manner, "I believe the audience are right; there's a *geography* in humour as well as in morals, which I had not previously considered."

Macklin could well afford to withdraw this piece, for he had already written his *chef d'œuvre*, *The Man of the World*, which had been produced in Dublin in 1766, under the title of *The True-Born Scotchman.* On this

piece he had bestowed great labour. For the last few years he had been altering and embellishing the dialogue, and he refers in several letters of different dates to the fact that he is at work upon it.

In the *Monthly Mirror* several extracts are printed from Macklin's notebooks and journals, from which it is seen how carefully he used to set down any idea as it occurred to him, in a form suggestive of further elaboration. Some of these refer to characters, others to politics or history, but all are made with a view to future literary use. Not a few of them relate to passages in *The Man of the World*. Thus he writes of "Party." "There is no reasoning with party or faction, for the first thing they attempt is to make a slave of reason;—very implicitly do whatever party or faction commands;—tyranny, disorder, injustice, violence, and habituated villany, are the political elements of all party and factions, which, like the enraged elements of nature, never leave off quarrelling till an ancient national officer—old General Ruin—sends them all to the devil." And again, of "Virtue and Vice" he says, "We are prouder of our follies and our vices that are applauded by the ignorant million, than of our virtues that are praised only by the thinking few." And of "Truth" he writes, "The world is tired of truth; it is so plain, so obvious, so simple, and so old; it gives no pleasure." These and many other scraps of epigrammatic, if somewhat cynical, common sense, we recognize in altered guise in his plays, and it is evident that in his latter years he made many sketches and models, as it were, in his study, before he finally sat down to write an important passage in a lecture or play.

The Man of the World had been undergoing this polishing process since its original production in 1764,

and it had also been somewhat extended. In its original form it had been a great favourite in Dublin, and Sir Pertinax MacSycophant was considered by every one a strong and accurate portrait of a Scotchman. It is said that Macklin received a note from a young Scotch nobleman, with a suit of handsome laced dress clothes, saying, "that he begged his acceptance of that present, as a small mark of the pleasure he received from the exhibition of so fine a picture of his grandfather." How far this story is true, we cannot say, but it is clear that in Dublin *The True-Born Scotchman* was as popular in his day as *The True-Born Irishman* had been in his.

About 1770, Miss Younge, afterwards Mrs. Pope, was engaged in the same theatre in Ireland with Macklin. Macklin recommended her to study the part of Lady Rodolpha, and Miss Younge put herself under his tuition. The Scotch accent and the Scotch manner were difficulties to be overcome, but Miss Younge proved herself equal to them, and her Lady Rodolpha was considered, by all good judges, to be one of her finest characters. In company with Macklin, she played the part many times in Ireland, and when he produced *The Man of the World* in London, at Covent Garden, on May 10, 1781, she was again the Lady Rodolpha.

The full cast of the comedy was as follows :—

LORD LUMBERCOURT	*Mr.*	*Wilson.*
SIR PERTINAX MACSYCOPHANT ...	„	*Macklin.*
EGERTON (his son)	„	*Lewis.*
SIDNEY (tutor to Egerton)	„	*Aikin.*
MELVILLE (father to Constantia) ...	„	*Clarke.*
COUNSELLOR PLAUSIBLE	„	*Wewitzer.*
SERJEANT EITHERSIDE	„	*Booth.*
SAM	„	*J. Wilson.*
JOHN	„	*Thompson.*
TOMLINS	„	*L'Strange.*

Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt	... *Miss Younge.*
Lady MacSycophant	... „ *Platt.*
Constantia Melville ...	... „ *Satchell.*
Betty Hint (a chambermaid) ...	... *Mrs. Wilson.*
Nanny	... „ *Davenett.*

It is an extraordinary thing for a man of eighty-two to have produced what was to a great extent a new play, and it is still more wonderful that the aged author should be the actor of the chief character in the comedy. The play would have been produced before, but for the licenser, who fancied there was too much criticism of courtiers in the text, to make it acceptable to the reigning powers; and the unpopularity of the ministry at that time, gave double edge to the satire of the piece. However, when the play was produced, it was, in spite of an offended Scotch clique, a great success, and it has held the stage down to our own time. Among Macklin's papers was a copy of a note of protest, the substance of which he laid before the Lord Chamberlain.

"The business of the stage is to correct vice and laugh at folly, and the Lord Chamberlain has a right to prohibit; but such prohibition is not to arise from caprice, or enmity, or partiality. What he prohibits must be offensive to virtue, morality, decency, or the laws of the land.

"This piece is in support of virtue, morality, decency, and the laws of the land. It satirizes both public and private venality, and reprobates inordinate passions and tyrannical conduct in a parent.

"The Lord Chamberlain, when called upon, ought in justice to point out the passages that are offensive to Government, or to individuals, or to society at large. No man, in a public trust, should exercise his authority to the injury of another, or to the privation of any public right.

"To seek the truth, to separate right from wrong, to determine, according to sound judgment, equity and justice, is the duty of a Chamberlain, and the end of his trust.

"My copy being detained, I asked the Deputy, why? or by what right he deprived me of my copy? For some time he would not assign any reason. I told him that I should resort to the laws of my country for redress; upon which he replied, 'That *I should but expose myself, and that they kept the copy by the usage of the office.*'

"I told him that I knew the stage before that law existed; that it could not be by custom; that it was the first time I had ever heard of an author being deprived of his copy; and that I should not submit to it.

"I also informed the Lord Chamberlain that I had acted the comedy in Ireland; that they were as careful there as here about anything that affected Government; that the Lords Lieutenants, who had seen it, laughed heartily at it, and deemed the satire generally pleasant and just.

"Some little creatures in office, to make their court to Lords Lieutenants, pronounced it offensive to Government; but their masters saw it again and again, and all the emotions they showed were laughter and applause."

The reasoning of this is sound enough, and it is very difficult nowadays to understand why any one should have sought to keep the play off the stage. The character of Sir Pertinax is in itself repulsive, and to thin-skinned Scotchmen may have been irritating, but the vice of parties is aimed at, of types rather than individuals, and the moral of the piece is excellent.

Cooke gives the following account of the play, and of Macklin's performance of Sir Pertinax:—

"The plot of this piece is briefly thus. A crafty, subtle Scotchman, thrown upon the world without friends, and little or no education, directs the whole of his observation and assiduity (in both of which he is indefatigable) to the pursuit of fortune and ambition. By his unwearied efforts and meannesses he succeeds, but, warned by the defects of his own education, he determines to give his eldest son the best that could be obtained; and, for this purpose, puts him

into the hands of a clergyman of learning, integrity, and honour, who, by teaching him good precepts and showing him the force of good example, makes him the very reverse of what the father intended, viz. not a man educated the better to make his court to the great, and extend the views of false ambition, but to make himself respected, independent, and happy. Thus he defeats the views of his father, who wants to marry him to a lady of rank and fortune (Lady Rodolpha), but to whom he cannot direct his affections, and marries the daughter of a poor officer, little better than a dependent on his mother, but who has virtues and accomplishments to adorn any situation.

"Macklin's Sir Pertinax MacSycophant was only equalled by his Jew; neither his age nor appearance obstructed the responsibility of the part. As the father of a grown-up family, he did not look too old for it, and the natural impression of his features corresponded with the cunning hypocrisy and violent temper of the character. Neither did the part, though long, suffer from want of his memory; he was in full possession of it through every scene; and, indeed, on the whole, exhibited a specimen of the human power unequalled in the annals of the theatre."

There were certainly many scenes and passages in the play well suited to Macklin's acting powers. He must have taken especial pleasure in the delivery of all those political hits with which the dialogue abounds. Of these, none is more effectual than Sir Pertinax MacSycophant's estimate of the political value of an oath, which he gives in a scene with Egerton, in the Fourth Act:—

"*Sir P.* Why, you are mad, sir? You have certainly been bit by some mad Whig or other. Oh, you are young, vara young in these matters; but experience will convince you, sir, that every man in public business has twa consciences—a religious and a political conscience. Why, you see a merchant now, or a shopkeeper, that kens the science o' the world, always looks upon an oath at a custom-house,

or behind a counter, only as an oath in business, a thing of course, a mere thing of course, that has nothing to do with religion ; and just so it is at an election : for instance, now I am a candidate, pray observe, and I gang till a periwig-maker, a hatter, or a hosier, and I give ten, twenty, or thraty guineas, for a periwig, a hat, or a pair of hose, and so on, through a majority of voters. Vara weel, what is the consequence? Why, this commercial intercourse, you see, begets a friendship betwixt us—a commercial friendship—and, in a day or twa these men gang and give their suffrages ; weel, what is the inference? Pray, sir, can you or any lawyer, divine, or casuist, ca' this a bribe? Nae, sir, in fair political reasoning, it is ainly generosity on the one side, and gratitude on the other ; so, sir, let me have nae more of your religious or philosophical refinements, but prepare, attend, and speak till the question, or you are nae son of mine. Sir, I insist upon it."

Equally expressive of the fierce honesty of Macklin's hatred of the political corruption of the time, is the following description of Lord Lumbercourt, which is put in the mouth of Egerton :—

"A trifling, quaint, haughty, voluptuous, servile tool! the mere lacquey of party and corruption ; who, for the prostitution of near thirty years, and the ruin of a noble fortune, has had the despicable satisfaction, and the infamous honour, of being kicked up and kicked down, kicked in and kicked out, just as the insolence, compassion, or convenience of leaders predominated; and now, being forsaken by all parties, his whole political consequence amounts to the power of franking a letter, and the right honourable privilege of not paying a tradesman's bills."

In a different strain, but not less powerful from the fact that the words are put in the mouth of Sir Pertinax, is his sarcastic description of a *levée*—

"*Sir P.* (*with a proud, angry resentment*). Zounds! sir, do you nat see what others do? Gentle and simple, temporal

and spiritual, lords, members, judges, generals, and bishops; aw crowding, hustling, and pushing foremest intill the middle of the circle, and there waiting, watching, and striving to catch a look or a smile fra the great mon, which they meet wi' an amicable reesibility of aspect—a modest cadence of body, and a conciliating co-operation of the whole mon; which expresses an officious promptitude for his service, and indicates that they luick upon themselves as the suppliant appendages of his power, and the enlisted Swiss of his poleetical fortune;—this, sir, is what you ought to do, and this, sir, is what I never once omitted for this five and thraty years, let who would be minister."

The great scene of the play is that in which Sir Pertinax explains to his son how he rose in the world to his present position, and expatiates upon the philosophy of "booing." The scene is so excellent in itself, and so characteristic of the author, that no apology is needed for quoting it at length.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A library.*

Enter SIR PERTINAX *and* EGERTON.

Sir P. Zounds! sir, I will not hear a word about it; I insist upon it you are wrong; you should have paid your court till my lord, and not have scrupled swallowing a bumper or twa, or twenty, till oblige him.

Eger. Sir, I did drink his toast in a bumper.

Sir P. Yes, you did; but how, how?—just as a bairn takes physic—with aversions and wry faces, which my lord observed; then, to mend the matter, the moment that he and the Colonel got intill a drunken dispute aboot religion, you slily slunged away.

Eger. I thought, sir, it was time to go, when my lord insisted upon half-pint bumpers.

Sir P. Sir, that was not levelled at you, but at the Colonel, in order to try his bottom ; but they aw agreed that you and I should drink oot of sma' glasses.

Eger. But, sir, I beg pardon ; I did not choose to drink any more.

Sir P. But, zoons! sir, I tell you there was a necessity for your drinking mair.

Eger. A necessity! in what respect, pray, sir?

Sir P. Why, sir, I have a certain point to carry, independent of the lawyers, with my lord, in this agreement of your marriage—aboot which I am afraid we shall have a warm squabble—and therefore I wanted your assistance in it.

Eger. But how, sir, could my drinking contribute to assist you in this squabble?

Sir P. Yes, sir, it would have contributed, and greatly have contributed, to assist me.

Eger. How so, sir?

Sir P. Nay, sir, it might have prevented the squabble entirely ; for as my lord is proud of you for a son-in-law, and is fond of your little French songs, your stories, and your *bon-mots*, when you are in the humour ; and guin you had but stayed, and been a little jolly, and drank half a score bumpers with him, till he had got a little tipsy, I am sure, when we had him in that mood, we might have settled the point as I could wish it, among ourselves, before the lawyers came ; but now, sir, I do not ken what will be the consequence.

Eger. But when a man is intoxicated, would that have been a seasonable time to settle business, sir?

Sir P. The most seasonable, sir ; for, sir, when my lord is in his cups, his suspicion is asleep, and his heart is aw jollity, fun, and guid fellowship ; and, sir, can there be a happier moment than that for a bargain, or to settle a dispute with a friend? What is it you shrug up your shoulders at, sir?

Eger. At my own ignorance, sir ; for I understand neither the philosophy nor the morality of your doctrine.

Sir P. I know you do not, sir ; and, what is worse, you never wull understand it, as you proceed. In one word, Charles, I have often told you, and now again I tell you once for aw, that the manœuvres of pliability are as necessary to

rise in the world as wrangling and logical subtlety are to rise at the bar; why, you see, sir, I have acquired a noble fortune, a princely fortune, and how do you think I raised it?

Eger. Doubtless, sir, by your abilities.

Sir P. Doubtless, sir, you are a blockhead. Nae, sir, I'll tell you how I raised it:—sir, I raised it—by booing (*bows very low*)—booing: sir, I never could stand straight in the presence of a great mon, but always booed, and booed, and booed—as it were by instinct.

Eger. How do you mean by instinct, sir?

Sir P. How do I mean by instinct! Why, sir, I mean by —by—by the instinct of interest, sir, which is the universal instinct of mankind. Sir, it is wonderful to think what a cordial, what an amicable—nay, what an infallible influence booing has upon the pride and vanity of human nature. Charles, answer me sincerely: have you a mind to be convinced of the force of my doctrine, by example and demonstration?

Eger. Certainly, sir.

Sir P. Then, sir, as the greatest favour I can confer upon you, I'll give you a short sketch of the stages of my booing, as an excitement, and a landmark for you to boo by, and as an infallible nostrum for a man of the world to rise in the world.

Eger. Sir, I shall be proud to profit by your experience.

Sir P. Vary weel, sir; sit ye down then, sit you down here (*they sit, c.*); and now, sir, you must recall to your thoughts that your grandfather was a man whose penurious income of captain's half-pay was the sum total of his fortune; and, sir, aw my provision fra him was a modicum of Latin, an expertness in arithmetic, and a short system of worldly council; the principal ingredients of which were a persevering industry, a rigid economy, a smooth tongue, a pliability of temper, and a constant attention to make every mon well pleased with himself.

Eger. Very prudent advice, sir.

Sir P. Therefore, sir, I lay it before you. Now, sir, with these materials I set out, a raw-boned stripling, fra the North to try my fortune with them here, in the Sooth; and my first

step into the world was a beggarly clerkship in Sawney Gordon's counting-house, here in the city of London, which you'll say afforded but a barren sort of prospect.

Eger. It was not a very fertile one, indeed, sir.

Sir P. The reverse, the reverse: weel, sir, seeing myself in this unprofitable situation, I reflected deeply; I cast about my thoughts morning, noon, and night; and marked every man, and every mode of prosperity. At last I concluded that a matrimonial adventure, prudently conducted, would be the readiest gait I could gang for the bettering of my condition, and accordingly I set about it. Now, sir, in this pursuit, beauty! beauty!—Ah! beauty often struck my een, and played about my heart, and fluttered, and beat, and knocked, and knocked; but the devil an entrance I ever let it get; for I observed, sir, that beauty is, generally, a—proud, vain, saucy, expensive, impertinent sort of commodity.

Eger. Very justly observed.

Sir P. And therefore, sir, I left it to prodigals and coxcombs that could afford to pay for it; and in its stead, sir, mark! I looked out for an ancient, weel-jointed, superannuated dowager; a consumptive, toothless, phthisicy, wealthy widow; or a shrivelled, cadaverous piece of deformity in the shape of an izzard, or an appersi—and—or, in short, ainy thing, ainy thing that had the siller—the siller; for that, sir, was the northstar of my affections. Do you take me, sir? was nae that right?

Eger. Oh! doubtless, doubtless, sir.

Sir P. Now, sir, where do you think I ganged to look for this woman with the siller? Nae till court, nae till playhouses, or assemblies; nae, sir, I ganged till the kirk, till the anabaptist, independent, bradlonian, and muggletonian meetings; till the morning and evening service of churches, and chapels of ease, and till the midnight, melting, conciliating love-feasts of the methodists; and there, sir, I at last fell upon an old, slighted, antiquated, musty maiden, that looked—ha, ha, ha! she looked just like a skeleton in a surgeon's glass case. Now, sir, this miserable object was religiously angry with herself and all the world; had nae comfort but in metaphysical visions and supernatural deli-

riums—ha, ha, ha! Sir, she was as mad—as mad as a Bedlamite.

Eger. Not improbable, sir; there are numbers of poor creatures in the same condition.

Sir P. Oh, numbers, numbers. Now, sir, this cracked creature used to pray, and sing, and sigh, and groan, and weep, and wail, and gnash her teeth constantly, morning and evening, at the Tabernacle at Moorfields: and as soon as I found she had the siller, aha, guid traith, I plumped me down on my knees, close by her—cheek by jowl—and prayed, and sighed, and sung, and groaned, and gnashed my teeth as vehemently as she could do for the life of her; ay, and turned up the whites of mine een, till the strings almost cracked again. I watched her motions, handed her till her chair, waited on her home, got most religiously intimate with her in a week, married her in a fortnight, buried her in a month, touched the siller, and with a deep suit of mourning, a melancholy port, a sorrowful visage, and a joyful heart, I began the world again. And this, sir, was the first boo—that is, the first effectual boo—I ever made till the vanity of human nature (*rise*). Now, sir, do you understand this doctrine?

Eger. (*c.*) Perfectly well, sir.

Sir P. (*r. c.*) Ay, but was it not right? Was it not ingenious, and well hit off?

Eger. Certainly, sir; extremely well.

Sir P. My next boo, sir, was till—till your ain mother, whom I ran away with fra the boarding-school; by the interest of whose family I got a guid smart place in the Treasury, and, sir, my very next step was intill the Parliament, the which I entered with as ardent and as determined an ambition as ever agitated the heart of Cæsar himself. Sir, I booed, and watched, and harkened, and ran about, backwards and forwards, and attended, and dangled upon the then great mon, till I got intill the very bowels of his confidence; and then, sir, I wriggled, and wrought, and wriggled, till I wriggled myself among the very thick of them. Ha! I got my snack of the clothing, the foraging, the contracts, the lottery tickets, and aw the political bonuses:

till at length, sir, I became a much wealthier mon than one-half of the golden calves I had been so long a-booing to; and was nae that booing to some purpose?

Eger. It was indeed, sir.

Sir P. But are you convinced of the guid effects and of the utility of booing?

Eger. Thoroughly, sir.

Sir P. Sir, it is infallible. But, Charles, ah! while I was thus booing, and wriggling, and raising this princely fortune, ah! I met with many heart-sores and disappointments fra the want of literature, eloquence, and other popular abeeleties. Sir, guin I could but have spoken in the hoose, I should have done the deed in half the time, but the instant I opened my mouth there they aw fell a laughing at me; aw which deficiencies, sir, I detearmined, at any expense, to have supplied by the polished education of a son, who I hoped would one day raise the house of MacSycophant till the highest pitch of ministerial ambition. This, sir, is my plan; I have done my part of it; Nature has done hers; you are popular, you are eloquent, aw parties like and respect you, and now, sir, it only remains for you to be directed—completion follows.

That a man of eighty-two years of age should impersonate such a character as Sir Pertinax MacSycophant is almost marvellous; for, as has been well said, the character is essentially one calling for both energy and elaboration of detail. A slovenly Sir Pertinax would be impossible; no audience would tolerate it. The author has not given him one popular speech; he has not one graceful phrase, nor one redeeming point. The resources of the theatre have not been called in to aid the situations of the character, or to enforce its points. "It is a character with which nothing can be done but by the aid of the purest art. It tests the actor in every word; it demands in every line the consummate performer. It is admirably drawn, and contrives to rivet the attention

for five acts, and to supply the place of plot, sentiment, and action." Such was the character which Macklin created; and since his day only one or two actors have attempted it with success. Edmund Kean attempted it in 1822, but is said to have robbed it of its dialect. The performance of George Frederick Cooke in 1802 was one of great merit, and, in our own day, Phelps, who revived *The Man of the World* in 1851, must have nearly rivalled the author, in his emphatic and characteristic impersonation of the part. Although Sir Pertinax remains to-day without a representative, it cannot be supposed that so admirable a comedy as *The Man of the World* has been laid on the shelf for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

CONSPIRACY (1773).

Macklin always changing and restless, wrote on December 22, 1772, to Colman, who was now acting manager of Covent Garden, to offer his services to that theatre. Mr Colman was only too ready to agree with Macklin, who now in his seventy-fourth year, was from a manager's point of view, a curious "draw" in Virginia, the Lady, and other favourite parts. He therefore asked Macklin to be kind enough to dictate his own terms. On February 27, 1773, Macklin sent him the proposals, subjoining, with a touch of buoyant egotism not uncharacteristic in a man of seventy-three, that "he had thoughts of playing Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and other parts such as would suit the time of life." Colman, probably passed laughingly over these suggestions of new parts, as the sole foundations of an old man, and, glad to secure so good an actor, agreed in a general way to the terms proposed. Macklin, however, regarded his *début* in Macbeth and Richard III. in a very different light, and the question of his right to these parts became a public matter of burning interest, owing to the following circumstances.

It appears that in the spring of 1773, Mr. William Smith, comedian, disagreed with Mr. George Colman, manager of Covent Garden, and gave formal notice that

he should not act in the following season. Mr. Smith and Mrs. Yates then attempted to obtain a licence for the Opera House in the Haymarket, but failed. It was during Smith's absence from the company that Colman made this agreement with Macklin. In September, the disappointed Smith desired to return to Covent Garden, and then it was seen that there would be a difficulty about Macbeth and Richard III., for these parts had belonged to Mr. Smith. Macklin himself said that it would not be "a pleasing circumstance" to him, to perform the parts of a fellow-actor, but, as these very parts had been his chief inducement to enter into this agreement, he would not resign them wholly. He then proposed that he and Smith should play Macbeth and Richard alternately, as Barry and Garrick had done, and to this Mr. Smith agreed. Mr. Smith having played Richard III., Mr. Macklin, on October 23, 1773, appeared as Macbeth.

There is no doubt that, in the political circle that surrounded the theatres at this day, Macklin's right to play Macbeth had been much discussed. Macklin must have had plenty of enemies, within and without the theatre, and these saw an opportunity, as they thought, of bringing him low. His straightforward obstinacy, his tactless honesty, his indomitable energy, and strong self-conceit, were not qualities likely to make him much beloved, and the toads and tadpoles that hopped around the stage doors and made heroes of the smaller histrionic fry, thought that they would try a fall with this fine old actor, who came out of another generation, as it were, to invade the domains of their pigmy favourites.

Macklin's Macbeth had nothing about it to rouse the animosity of the theatre-goers, unless, indeed, it was his kilt. But audiences were, we think, longing at that time

for a little more reality in the staging of the play and the dressing of the characters, and no exception seems to have been taken to his mode of dressing the part. And yet the change must have been a startling one. For at this time English audiences were content with the suit of scarlet and gold, with a tail wig, that we may see in Zoffany's portrait of Garrick in this character. But actors and managers were beginning to be exercised in mind about accuracy of costume, and as early as 1757, Digges, on December 26 of that year in Edinburgh, produced Macbeth "with the characters entirely new dressed after the manner of the ancient Scots." Nevertheless, if John Taylor is right, there had been no such revival in London, prior to Macklin's performance, for he says that:—

"The character of Macbeth had been hitherto performed in the attire of an English general; but Macklin was the first who performed it in the old Scottish garb. His appearance was previously announced by the Coldstream March, which I then thought the most delightful music I had ever heard; and I never hear it now without most pleasing recollections. When Macklin appeared on the bridge he was received with shouts of applause, which were repeated throughout the performance. I was seated in the pit, and so near the orchestra that I had a full opportunity of seeing him to advantage. Garrick's representation of the character was before my time; Macklin's was certainly not marked by studied grace of deportment, but he seemed to be more in earnest in the character than any actor I have subsequently seen."

This is Taylor's record of the performance, in which we can certainly find nothing that could tend to outrage the feelings of a critical and, at the same time, fair-minded audience. Arthur Murphy called his interpretation a "black-letter copy of Macbeth," and Cooke, his biographer, says it was rather "a lecture on the part than

a theatrical representation." But every one crowded to see the performance, and George Stevens wrote to Garrick, "One hour I was squeezed to death at the door in Bow Street; another spent I in the pit among half the blackguards about town; and for the space of three and a half more, I was imprisoned to hear the lines of Shakespeare, elaborately pumped up from the bottom of a well as deep as that in Dover Castle." I doubt very much if his enemies cared what kind of a representation it was. They disliked the man, not the actor, and, egged on by Smith and his friends—some say by Garrick as well—determined to make an example of him.

The Press of the day seemed to have damned his efforts before they saw them, and their after-criticisms are mostly jeers and gibes and paragraphs of ridicule and contempt. The *Morning Chronicle* does, indeed, give an interesting critical estimate of the performance, which ratifies the epigrams of Murphy and Cooke; and this journal notes especially the dresses, which it says "are new, elegant, and of a sort hitherto unknown to a London audience." The *Evening Post* makes an elaborate jest about poor Macklin mistaking Shakespeare's instructions, and as early as the first scene of the second act murdering Macbeth instead of Duncan; while the *St. James's Chronicle* sets out a list of *jeune premier* characters which it understands Mr. Macklin intends to enact, informing the public that he proposes to play Ranger "when he has learned to dance, and, when his years shall be suited to such characters, to play Master Stephen, Tony Lumpkin, the Schoolboy, and to conclude his theatrical life with playing the Fool."

After the first performance, Macklin's friends wrote to the papers, openly charging Garrick with instigating the opposition, and during the contest much appeared in

the papers to lead the public to believe that Garrick was not unconnected with the conspiracy. There is no doubt that, whether Garrick had anything to do with it or not, his friends thought to please him by stirring up the public against Macklin. The following from the *Monthly Mirror* is an excellent example of the kind of flattery by abuse of his rivals, that the anti-Macklinites poured out in copious libations at the feet of Garrick. Whether the great little actor smiled at his sycophants and their adulations it is hard to say; but if he did not, it is difficult to understand why their manufacture continued.

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE MACKLINITE CONTROVERSY BY AN ANTI-MACKLINITE.

Eight kings appear and pass over in order, and Banquo the last.

"Old *Quin*, ere fate suppress'd his lab'ring breath,
In studied accents grumbled out Macbeth.
Next *Garrick* came, whose utterance truth imprest,
While every look the tyrant's guilt confest:
Then the cold *Sheridan* half froze the part,
Yet what he lost by Nature sav'd by art.
Tall *Barry* now advanced towards Birnam Wood,
Nor ill performed the scenes—he understood.
Grave *Mossop* next to *Forres* shap'd his march;
His words were minute-guns, his actions starch:
Rough *Holland* too, but pass his errors o'er,
Nor blame the actor when the man's no more.
Then heavy *Ross* essayed the tragic frown,
But beef and pudding kept all meaning down.
Next careless *Smith* tried on the murderous mask,
While o'er his tongue light-tripped the hurried task.
Hard *Macklin* late guilt's feelings strove to speak,
While sweats infernal drench'd his iron cheek,

Like Fielding's kings * his fancied triumph past,
And all he boasts is that he falls the last."

The newspapers had plenty of acrid stuff of this kind, for the iron-cheeked Macklin, before the 23rd of October, when he first played Macbeth, but the audiences did not as yet take it up. The anti-Macklinite party were hardly strong enough, and though the first performance was noisy, it was not a failure. The party appeared, however, in great force on October 30, when Macklin played Macbeth for the second time. Macklin, before the commencement of the piece, appealed to the public for protection; and the public, always pleased by a direct appeal to its powers, sat through the performance quietly, and left the most heated anti-Macklinites to express their disapproval in somewhat solitary anger. It appears that on the first evening a Mr. Sparks, the son of an actor, with Reddish, the best stage villain of the day, were in the house, and Macklin was told that they hissed him. Whether or not it is "the birthright of Englishmen to hiss and clap," it was a clear breach of professional etiquette, for an actor of a rival house to come and hiss another actor, and when Macklin, in his appeal to the audience for protection, mentioned what Reddish and Sparks had done, it gave rise to considerable indignation. Reddish and Sparks, however, denied the imputation, going the length of inserting affidavits of their denial in the newspapers; and on November 6, Macklin, in somewhat brutal taste, came forward with proofs of Reddish and Sparks' guilt in his hand, instead of an apology to them on his tongue. These proofs were affidavits of people who swore that they saw and heard Reddish and Sparks hissing. It afterwards appeared

* In "Tom Thumb."

that these witnesses were in all probability mistaken in their men. The audience was enraged, the party was delighted, disturbance arose in every part of the theatre, and the performance went through with difficulty. The town was now in a state of ecstatic frenzy ; the party was reinforced by friends of Reddish and Sparks. Macklin was told if he did not prove his assertion against these men, he would be expelled the stage. As for Macklin himself, we can imagine him not wholly mournful at the stir he had raised. He knew he was right,—he always was right in his own estimation,—he knew he could fight these adversaries, and, on the whole, rather enjoyed the prospect than otherwise. On November 13 he appeared again as Macbeth, but the party was too strong for him. They would not hear him, and the evening passed in riot and disorder. The leadership of this business, as far as we can now make it out, appears to have fallen into the hands of one Thomas Leigh, a tailor, a brother-in-law of Sparks, and the landlord of the house where Reddish lodged. Two men, named Aldus and James, having been attacked by some women in the theatre on one of these riotous evenings, were also very prominent in the band of anti-Macklinites ; and a Mr. Miles or Mr. Clarke seemed to have been drawn into the affair, as doubtless many others were, from a spirit of riot and devilry. Leigh collected a band of tailors and others from the neigbouring alehouses, to whom he distributed drink, and "they were told that besides all this comfortable preparation, they should each of them have a shilling a piece for the night's work ; and after the work should be completed, and this old unknown villain of the name of Macklin should be driven to hell, these men should go to the Bedford Arms and have supper." This was the kind of rabble, and these were the leaders who, in these riotous

nights, formed the great majority of the audience in Covent Garden Theatre. Macklin and the manager hoped that by his giving up Macbeth the angry public would be appeased, and the bills announced him for November 18, 1773, in his favourite characters of *Shylock* and *Sir Archy MacSarcasm*. They must have been shaken in their belief when they saw the faces of the crowd ranged in battle array from pit to gallery, impatient for the riot. We may continue the account of the scene in the graphic language of Mr. Dunning, Macklin's counsel in the trial that arose out of this night's work.

"If I could describe the Managers, I would attempt a little description of their situation upon this occasion. I conjecture, from the knowledge I have of some of them, that they were all by this time trembling alive in the greenroom, for they foresaw that, whatever might be the conquest, or whoever might be the victors, they were sure to profit little, and they were sure to be defeated, whoever might be triumphant. They looked at their chandeliers, probably wistfully, foreseeing that they were looking at them for the last time; they looked at their benches, apprehending and fearing that those benches would soon come much nearer in contact with them, than while they remained in the situation in which they placed them. They kept off the important signal which was to commence hostilities. They kept the curtain down as long as they could, but persisting in the purpose of keeping the curtain down would equally have disobliged every part of the audience; and after they yielded to the invincible necessity of the occasion, and the curtain arose, then the battle began. Gentlemen, you understand enough of the performance to know that *Shylock* does not make his appearance in the first scene. Other performers, who had offended nobody, nor meant to offend anybody, came forward to act their parts; they were instantly saluted with a strong denunciation of this body of conspirators, 'that if they would consult their own safety they had better get out of their reach.' When this vengeance was announced,

they were not in a humour to stay ; they hurried away, and probably overturned some of the managers in their escape. That threat being understood to go to *Mr. Macklin*, he, the delinquent, came forward with such feelings as I leave to better description ;—he came forward with those feelings which others feel at other places where they are to perform for the last time.

"*Mr. Macklin*, however, came forward, and he tried, by all means that occurred to him to be proper, to deprecate the vengeance to himself, to excite their compassion, and to call for the protection of those that had called themselves or had been called by *Aldus*, '*the candid, impartial audience.*' He put himself in all the humiliating and supplicating postures he could ; he endeavoured to throw as much complacency in his countenance as his features would permit of. He tried to make himself heard, but he tried to still less purpose than I sometimes try when speaking in an audience like the present. No, hearing was not the business at all ; will soothing do? Will looking as you like do? Why, none of these things will do. Well, what will do? 'Why, you old whoring rascal, you superannuated villain,' and abundance of epithets of that sort. 'You must go to hell ; if you will consent to go there, all is well ; peace will be restored provided you will be the voluntary sacrifice for that peace.' Now, *Mr. Macklin* has never yet held himself forth to perform the part of *Theseus*, or of going to hell ; if that should ever be the case, it was the business of another time—it was not the business of the night. It was not the intention of *Mr. Macklin* to submit to the pleasure of the public in that trifling particular. *Mr. Macklin* retired ; the clamour increased. *Mr. Macklin* advanced ; the clamour increased still higher. *Mr. Macklin* all but kneeled—I do not know whether he did not go down upon one knee ;—this procured a momentary approbation ; but, as the other knee did not accompany it, the uproar increased. *Mr. Macklin* still had courage enough to distinguish himself from those performers who had preceded him and retreated, but he was speedily told that this was not a business of words—that noise was not all he had to apprehend. This intimation

was given him by an apple which hit him full in the face. Gentlemen, you need not be told that when one apple begins to fly in this place there are a thousand ready to fly, and the storm began to be general. It was time *Mr. Macklin* should consult his safety; he did as many heroes before him have done—he thought running away was no bad policy, for then he might live to fight another day; but if he stayed, the business would end there.

"Those spectators that were disposed to see, remained for something to be seen and heard. The clamour at length grew distinct enough to point out to those within the sound, what it was that was expected and insisted upon—the dismission of *Mr. Macklin* was called for; the managers were called out in order to consent to that dismission. The managers, who had, I believe, as little taste for apples as *Mr. Macklin*, thought it still right to be snug, but thought it prudent still to acquiesce, and they called for the assistance of one of the performers first. He painted a large board black, as a signal of the funeral occasion that produced it; upon that there were in large legible white characters these words expressed: 'AT THE COMMAND OF THE PUBLIC, MR. MACKLIN IS DISCHARGED.'

"One would have imagined that this should have been enough. No, even this was not enough; 'for who knows who it is that has painted this black board and the white inscription upon it?' All this while, *Macklin* might not possibly be discharged. 'Let us, while we are in the moment of victory, see that that victory be complete; that it be decisive: don't leave it to chance, and for them to tell us, by-and-by, that we shall have this battle to fight again.' The helter-skelter people, the light-horse troops that came forward, they and *Macklin*, the more formidable body, had been routed, but still the managers were skulking and hiding themselves. 'Let us make use of our victory with a deliberation, a coolness, and circumspection that becomes great officers,' as I have described them. They peremptorily insisted that the managers should come forth, and they were not content with the assurances that they had received, but they distinguished a worthy friend of mine, *Mr. Colman*,

and they insisted that he should come forth. *Mr. Colman*, with a reluctance which I do not wonder at, which in the same situation I should have felt,—*Mr. Colman* was dragged forwards, and obliged to make his appearance. Some of the benches had begun to be torn up ; one of the chandeliers had been attempted to be broken ; the mischief was instant, the ruin was inevitable. Nothing but an occasion so pressing as that could have drawn my friend from his hiding-place ; that occasion did draw him ; out he came to receive the sentence of this public. He was the principal of those defendants that *Mr. Aldus* had made such, by his declaration filed in the *Morning Post* that morning ; he came to know what was their pleasure respecting him ; it seemed it was just that which *Mr. Aldus* hinted at in his letter in the morning ; namely, that he was to give that satisfaction to *Mr. Aldus*, for the injury he had received, that a *candid, independent audience* should think him entitled to. This *candid, independent audience* thought Mr. Aldus entitled to that satisfaction, which consisted of a perpetual dismission of *Mr. Macklin*. *Mr. Colman*, finding that this was the sense of this *impartial part* of the audience, as soon as he was permitted to be heard, repeated that *Mr. Macklin* was dismissed ; that it was their object always to please the public, and their happiness to conform to their pleasure, when they knew what their pleasure was.

" I don't wonder that my little friend did not distinguish the public from these people, who raised this clamour ; it was not a moment for nice distinctions, because, if they had been distinguished, it would have produced some personal outrage to himself, and some injury to his property. He found himself unable to contend with the stream, and *Mr. Macklin* was dismissed. This was the purpose for which this army was collected together. This purpose they completed ; therefore when this object was accomplished, they are dismissed ; the business was at an end ; the public went without any entertainment for the night."

There was no doubt of the public victory and of Macklin's defeat. Leigh, the tailor, and his forces from

The Dog and the Phœnix, had driven Macklin from the stage, and a second time in his life he found himself an exile from the playhouse. But Macklin never recognized defeat, and promptly appealed to the strong arm of the criminal law to protect him, and in the next year, 1774, proceeded in the King's Bench against James, Clarke, Aldus, Miles, Leigh, and Sparks for conspiracy and riot. No cause being shown except in the case of Sparks, the information was duly exhibited against the other five, and they were convicted on February 24, 1775, Clarke of riot only, the rest of the whole information.

But though it takes but two or three lines of print to express the judgment of the law on Macklin's enemies, it was no less than eighteen months between the day that Macklin was hissed off the stage and the day on which he was able to return. It had been his annual custom to play at his daughter's benefit, but even this had to be given up, until the slow delays of the law allowed the conspirators to be convicted of their crime. How irksome this compulsory retirement from the stage must have been to a man of his nature may be gathered from the following letter to his daughter :—

"March 14, 1774.

"My Dear,

"I could not answer your request sooner about your benefit. I have felt much more pain for you on that point than from all the losses and vexations besides, that have arisen to us from the malice of my persecutors. My counsel being out of town, my anxiety for your interest, my eager inclination to play for your benefit, and the fear of giving my enemies an advantage by a false step, perplex me greatly. I think I need not make use of any argument to convince you, or those who know that your welfare has ever had a place in my heart. You have a right to it by nature, which right you have established by a much dearer

tie, in my opinion—that of an irreproachable and amiable conduct, which never has cost me a pang, or even an apprehension. From hence, you must feel that I do my own peace a severe violence when I deny myself the satisfaction of contributing to your emolument. But so it is; if I play at your benefit, I shall, as I am informed, be insulted again by my enemies, and my kindness to you will be turned into an argument against me in my pursuit of justice. Under these apprehensions, my dear, I cannot, as matters stand at present, attempt to assist you at your benefit. The loss of my not playing will, no doubt, be considerable—near £200, a great sum in a player's revenue. But consider what a disgrace it would be to you to have a disturbance at your benefit. Consider how it would distress your friends, and those who regard you, and the whole audience, my persecutors excepted; and let me add, that I would not, on your account, contribute to such a disturbance for any sum that a theatre would afford. I was in hopes that those who had injured me would, before this time, have seen the inhumanity of their conduct, have repented, and have taken such measures as would have extenuated the odium of their unparalleled, unprovoked, and cruel outrage. Such a step would in my opinion have been pleasing to the public, and what men, guilty of such an enormity, owe to their own reputation; but so far are some of them from such a humane measure, that, with menace and defiance, they have told me that I shall be pursued with greater resentment than before, for my having dared to mention some of their names in a court of justice, and in support of this resentment they plead the power of the law itself, which, they say, entitles them to hiss and explode, so as to drive whomsoever they please from the stage, by the law of custom. This is a point that I shall not dispute with them; all I can do is, to keep it out of their power, till it is settled by those who have a right to adjust those matters. In the mean time I advise you to write to Mr. Colman; let him know how you are circumstanced, or enclose my letter and send it to him; that will inform him thoroughly of your situation and mine. Request him to

defer your night to the 27th of April, by which time something may happen to be determined that may give a favourable turn to my affairs, so as to enable me to play for you, which will be a greater satisfaction to me than either my tongue or pen can express.

"I am, my dear,

"Most affectionately yours,

"CHARLES MACKLIN.

"To Miss Macklin."

Judgment was at length moved for in the King's Bench on May 11, 1775. The matter had already come before Lord Mansfield, the presiding judge, on a former occasion, and he had then given the defendants a strong hint that they would do well to make Mr. Macklin a substantial offer, and let the matter drop by pleading guilty; but no notice had been taken of this suggestion, and the defendants now found his lordship in no very merciful humour. He was eager to refer the matter to the Master for compensation to be awarded, and if Macklin had not intervened, and suggested another course, it would have gone hard with the defendants indeed.

"For," said Lord Mansfield, "there is £1260 besides implied damages; and this, in the sight of the public, is a very heinous offence. For, as I took care to say before, to be sure every man that is at the playhouse has a right to express his approbation or disapprobation *instantaneously*, according as he likes either the acting or the piece; that is a right due to the theatre—an unalterable right; they must have that. The gist of the crime here is, coming by conspiracy, to ruin a particular man—to hiss, if they were ever so pleased—let him do ever so well, they were to knock him down and hiss him off the stage. They did not come to approve or disapprove, as the sentiments of their mind might be, but they came with a black design, and that is the most ungenerous thing that can be. What a terrible condition is an actor upon the stage in with an enemy, who

makes part of the audience! It is ungenerous to take the advantage; and what makes the black part of the case is—it is all done with a conspiracy to ruin him; and if the court were to imprison and fine every one of them, Mr. Macklin may bring his action against them, and I am satisfied there is no jury that would not give considerable damages; but it is better for both sides to refer them to the Master, and I shall direct him to make a liberal satisfaction."

With a judge in this humour about the business, the defendants may well have wished their victory of eighteen months ago had not been so easily won; but Macklin, who was an old campaigner, understood stage effect as well as any man, saw his opportunity, and then saved them. I do not wish for a moment to discount the generosity of Macklin's conduct, but no one can read the account of the closing scene of the trial without seeing its effectiveness from a stage point of view.

There has been a long argument before Lord Mansfield, about sending the matter before a Master on the question of damages, and the judge and counsel for Macklin, and for the defendants, having had their say, without coming to any sensible conclusion about the matter, the actor himself at length intervenes to the following effect:—

"*Mr. Macklin:* My Lord, I shall always be happy in obeying any advice that comes from this court, but there is one circumstance that I think demands an explanation. Whatever falls from the tongue of an advocate is easily transferred to the report, and the credulity of the public. A gentleman has thrown out that I want revenge. My Lord, I have no such idea. I never had. If this matter had been submitted to me, they would have found me a far different kind of man. Not a man of revenge. In every stage of this business, my Lord, from the first to the last, I have felt a resentment, but

I have always felt a compassion, even for the people I was prosecuting.

"I solicited them, my Lord, in every method that was in my power—with all humanity, and even with a meanness of spirit, my Lord, and now I am told that I want revenge.

"My Lord, it has been said, too, by the advocate, that he has affidavits; this is an imputation, my Lord, an *innuendo*, unwarrantable in a liberal mind.

"My Lord, if he talks of affidavits, I have affidavits of a tremendous nature; not affidavits, but witnesses, to show that this cause has not yet been bottomed. But, my Lord, I do not rise to contend, or for revenge. I never prosecuted for vengeance; I despise the idea. Let them here, in the circumstances that they stand in, produce me but an ordinary safety.

"I prosecuted from the first law of nature, *self-defence*, and a *public example*. My Lord, I have a feeling and resentment too, but I have compassion. My Lord, I defy them to make me an offer, liberal in an ordinary degree, that I would not accept of, without troubling the Master. I have only my expenses in view. Besides, my daughter has suffered to the amount of £250. I have now proposals from Scotland; I have proposals from Ireland; I could get money here; but, if I am sent before the Master, I must lose all that opportunity, and more money than will, perhaps, arise from the interview with the Master. Therefore, with humble submission to the court—it is difficult to speak, circumstanced as I am, without impertinence, without digression—I am aware that no man, but he that has travelled in the paths of this court, knows what to say in it correctly; but, in contradiction to the learned gentleman now in my eye, who says that I want revenge, and to show that he is ignorant of my disposition in this point, let any man of honour be appointed immediately. I will abide by everything that he suggests of justice. I want no revenge. And, my Lord, I have something further to say. This man before your Lordship, *this Taylor*, within these few days, has dared to tell me, before many witnesses—responsible tradesmen, in Covent Garden, with an insolence unbecoming his

situation or character, 'Ah, ah, ah! you will send me to gaol, then. It may be against the law to *hiss*, but it is not against the law to laugh; for, depend upon it, when you play tragedy, you will have a very merry audience. Ah, ah, ah!'

"I assure your Lordship, that this man, *though he is but a Taylor*, has a very *sharp* tongue, and a very quick mind.

"My Lord, were I to utter his *bon-mots* upon me and my circumstances, you would laugh heartily indeed; but of him I shall say no more.

"The advice that fell from the Court, when the rule was made absolute, though directed to the defendants, made a very deep impression on my mind. I felt the humanity, I felt the awfulness of that advice; and from that moment, I solicited, with all the anxiety of my power, to bring them to a composition. *Money was not my object then; it is not my object now.*

"My Lord, I have gentlemen in court to prove that I laid a plan of general accommodation, and I will reveal it now.

(*Mr. Macklin* here addressed himself to the defendants.)

"Pay me my expenses—you have injured me as a man; make some compensation to the managers of the theatre; make some compensation to my daughter, whose benefit is depending.

"My Lord, thus I projected it, as a means of general reconciliation; with these gentlemen I would have contrived it, and I stated it to my advocate. I suggested it to the defendants, that the proposal might come from them, and that, consequently, they might obtain a general popularity.

"But how is this compensation to be made? What was the mode I suggested? It is this:

"Let them take one hundred pounds' worth of tickets for *Miss Macklin's* benefit; she has lost £250. Let them take one hundred pounds' worth of tickets for *Mr. Macklin*, and let them take one hundred pounds' worth of tickets, upon some night that he plays, as a kind of compensation to the managers. This was of no advantage to me. I can fill my house without it; but I meant to give them the popularity of doing a justice to the man they had injured,

and of convincing the public that they would never do the like again, and that they were in amity, and not in enmity, with me. My Lord, I have nothing more to say.

"*Lord Mansfield:* Then I think you have done yourself great credit, and great honour by what you have now said; and I think your conduct is wise too, and I think it will support you with the public against any man that shall attack you. I think it highly becoming on your part; for now what he proposes is, to give up *all this litigation*, only to be paid *his costs*, which, in a *double* sense, he ought to be paid—I say a *double sense*, because the prosecution was well founded, and particularly, because the defendants would not stop it when it was recommended to them—and a small satisfaction in this way to his daughter for her benefit. I think some single person has already offered more for his own share.

"*Mr. Macklin,* you have done yourself great credit by it; and the public, I am satisfied, especially in this country, love generosity. You will do more good by this, in the eyes of the public, than if you had received all the money that you had a right to receive.

"I think you have acted *handsomely*, *honestly*, *honourably*, and done yourself great service by it. I think it is a most generous conduct. *Mr. Blake*, you will be able to settle it.

"*Mr. Macklin:* If *Messrs. Clarke*, *Aldus*, *and James* will meet me; I will not meet the Taylor, for it is impossible to confine his tongue.

"*Lord Mansfield: Mr. Macklin*, see whether I cannot make peace between you. Now, suppose he undertakes to be bound by a rule of court, to stand committed if he ever so much as, by look or word, puts you in a passion.

"The proposal, then, is to pay him his costs, and to take three hundred pounds' worth of tickets, in the way that he has mentioned. Let it be so.

"*Mr. Macklin*, the house will receive so much benefit from it, perhaps they will pay you the arrears.

"*Mr. Macklin:* My Lord, I never did quarrel with a manager for money yet; I never made a bargain with a man; whatever they offer me, I take.

"*Lord Mansfield: You have met with great applause to-day. You never acted better.*"

One can imagine something of the "bated breath and whispering humbleness" with which Macklin addressed the court, explaining his sense of the humanity, nay, the awfulness, of the advice he had received from the Bench. Nor can one believe that his generous offer to the defendants in the trial was given without some knowledge of the stage effect to be produced by his words. Even the judge himself seems to have been overwhelmed by the theatricality of the atmosphere, and to have delivered the 'tag' to his judgment as though it had been the blessing of a heavy father. But in all seriousness, Macklin had done the right thing, and the drama in the law courts was well ended in accordance with the dictates of poetic justice. The persecuted Macklin was once more restored to popular favour, and the wicked conspirators defeated.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEVENTH AGE.

PEACE was no sooner concluded with the conspirators than Macklin entered into an engagement with Mr. Harris, in the spring of 1775, and made his appearance for his daughter's benefit, meeting with a very gratifying reception. This so pleased him that he afterwards played Richard III., but his success in this character must have sprung from the special circumstances under which he attempted the part, and the performance was soon relinquished.

During the next season, 1776, he performed but seldom. Even at this advanced age, his head was full of daring schemes, and plans that would have been considered venturesome in a man of half his years. He seriously considered the advisability of taking a farm of three or four hundred acres near Cork, and applied to several Irish gentlemen to aid him in the matter; but, finding nothing that exactly suited his wants, gave up the idea, not without regret.

About this time, Henderson was brought to the father of the stage, who granted him an interview. He was still a young man destined for greater honours than those he had already attained. Macklin gruffly acknowledged his genius, but bade him unlearn all he had learned, that he might hope to learn to be a player. He played Shylock for the first time during the season of 1777. He is

remembered as a great Shylock, and created some dissension among the critics by abolishing the phrase, "many a time and oft," and pointing the line thus:

"Signor Antonio many a time, and oft on the Rialto."

During the next year Macklin gave an unnecessarily brutal interpretation of Sir John Brute, but otherwise made but little stir upon the stage, busying himself with his writing, and some preparation for a provincial tour. He was very anxious to play at Edinburgh, and with that view wrote to Tate Wilkinson:

"I wish you would, in legible characters, and plain, clear common sense, let me know upon what terms I may play with you at Edinburgh. I shall have a new farce or two and a new comedy, with the London stamp of approbation or disapprobation upon them, to offer to the Edinburgh audience, before whom I have sincerely the warmest inclination to appear, for, *sans* compliment, I think that the purest, that is the most correct, audience now of the empire. Dublin, perhaps, from national partiality, or fair candour, may be on a par with them; for the body of the law there, as in Edinburgh, is the bulk of the audience, and surely that is the most sensible part of an audience, if not of the nation.

"Bad houses at both the theatres. Henderson has not had half a house yet—all the American War. Did I not say so it would be?

"The Lord Chamberlain has refused to license a comedy of mine, being seasoned too highly respecting venality, and the other I have withdrawn, or rather suspended for a private reason."

This was the *Man of the World*, which was, as we have seen, satisfactorily produced in 1781.

Although this proposed journey to Edinburgh came to nothing, it is interesting to know that Macklin and the other great actors of the date considered a provincial tour

almost as valuable to their pockets and reputation as it is considered by "stars" of to-day. Dublin as a dramatic centre we have already spoken of, and Edinburgh, as readers of Mr. Dibdin's excellent "Annals of the Edinburgh Stage" will know, was no mean second; York, under Tate Wilkinson, was a flourishing dramatic stronghold, and long remained so; and even Manchester was at that date not unknown. Writing in the preface to *The Modish Wife* in 1775, Francis Gentleman gives Manchester audiences much the same character that Charles Matthews and other actors of our own time have given them.

"Manchester," he writes, "I have already mentioned as a place of opulence and spirit. The upper class are not very keen, yet they are very sensible and very candid critics; they would rather praise than find fault, yet they expect somewhat more than bare decency. Attention is the chiefest part of their applause, and, indeed, the best any audience can give; that cannot be obtained by puffing. The lower class, freed from their industrious avocations, are willing to receive relaxation in the most agreeable manner."

Francis Gentleman once met Macklin at Chester, and not improbably acted there in his company. His reminiscences of the occasion are sufficiently interesting.

"I reached Chester," he writes, "at a time when Mr. Macklin had brought an excellent company to that city. Knowing several of the members, and wishing to know others, I protracted my journey a matter of three months, which passed pleasantly and rationally, saved too great expense, loss of time, and a near chance of matrimony, which would then have been peculiarly indiscreet."

He tells us, too, writing of Chester audiences, "that they are rather to be taken with a Theatre Royal name, than real merit without that very honourable addition."

Chester in those days was a stopping-place on the high-road to Dublin, and probably the Chester people from time to time saw all the great actors of the day. Macklin, of course, made several journeys to Dublin, and probably played at Chester on several occasions. He and his wife are known to have played there soon after their marriage.

However, no provincial tour was arranged on this occasion, and Macklin remained in London, busying himself, among other things, with a Chancery suit against Harris, which commenced in 1776, and was not settled until 1781. During these years Macklin lost many dear friends. Silver-toned Barry, his pupil and colleague, passed away in 1777; and two years later the remains of the great Garrick were carried to his resting-place in Westminster Abbey. Now in 1781 his daughter died, after a painful illness.

After the production of *The Man of the World*, and his visit to Ireland in 1785, Macklin returned to London, and, it is said, spent some time in endeavouring to prepare a "History of the Stage." It is greatly to be regretted that he had not, at some earlier period of his life, set himself to this work. No man could boast a longer experience, no man had lived among so many generations of actors, no man's judgment and discrimination in matters theatrical were more to be relied on than his. However, at eighty-five it was too late to commence such a task, and his unique reminiscences were left to decay in his fading memory, and to be handed down to us through the medium of tavern hearsay.

During these years he had in a great measure withdrawn from the stage, but, pressed by his friends to appear, he announced for the character of Shylock on January 10, 1788. All went well until the second act, when his memory failed him. He was deeply affected,

but managed to step before the audience, and address them somewhat as follows :—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"Within these very few hours I have been seized with a terror of mind I never in my life felt before ; it has totally destroyed my corporeal as well as mental faculties. I must therefore request your patience this night, a request which an old man may hope is not unreasonable. Should it be granted, you may depend that this will be the last night, unless my health shall be entirely re-established, of my ever appearing before you in so ridiculous a situation."

Upon this, the applause of a sympathetic audience so roused Macklin that he was able to continue the part to the end. It was sad that a man of his age should have been compelled still to earn his living on the stage, but he could not afford to live in idleness as long as he was able to walk the boards. On October 10, 1788, he played Shylock and Sir Archy MacSarcasm, apparently without breaking down ; on November 26, he appeared as Sir Pertinax, but his memory failing him, he addressed the audience and retired ; and on February 18, 1789, *The Merchant of Venice* was announced, but a handbill was issued stating that Macklin was ill and that the programme would be changed.* His last performance was on May 7, 1789, and the following account of this mournful end to his theatrical career is given by Cooke :—

"His last attempt on the stage was on the 7th of May following, in the character of Shylock, for his own benefit. Here his imbecilities were previously foreseen, or at least dreaded, by the manager ; but who, knowing the state of Macklin's finances, gave, with his usual liberality, this indulgence to his age and necessities, and, to prevent the disappointment of his audience (who, he knew from long

* These facts are placed beyond dispute by the Covent Garden playbills in the British Museum—a complete set.

experience, were always ready to assist in those liberal indulgences to an old and meritorious servant, he had the late Mr. Ryder under-studied in the part, ready dressed to supply Macklin's deficiencies if necessary. The precaution afterwards proved so. When Macklin had dressed himself for the part, which he did with his usual accuracy, he went into the greenroom, but with such a 'lack-lustre looking eye' as plainly indicated his inability to perform; and, coming up to the late Mrs. Pope, said, 'My dear, are you to play to-night?' 'Good God! to be sure I am, sir. Why, don't you see I am dressed for Portia?' 'Ah! very true; I had forgot. But who is to play Shylock?' The imbecile tone of his voice, and the inanity of the look, with which the last question was asked, caused a melancholy sensation in all who heard it. At last Mrs. Pope, rousing herself, said, 'Why you, to be sure; are you not dressed for the part?' He then seemed to recollect himself, and, putting his hand to his head, exclaimed, 'God help me! my memory, I am afraid, has left me.' He, however, after this went on the stage, delivered two or three speeches of Shylock in a manner that evidently proved he did not understand what he was repeating. After a while he recovered himself a little, and seemed to make an effort to rouse himself, but in vain; nature could assist him no further; and, after pausing some time as if considering what to do, he then came forward, and informed the audience, 'That he now found he was unable to proceed in the part, and hoped they would accept Mr. Ryder as his substitute, who was already prepared to finish it.' The audience accepted his apology with a mixed applause of indulgence and commiseration, and he retired from the stage for ever."

On April 4, 1790, Macklin lost his only son, John Macklin, who had long been in a state of ill-health, brought on by his own reckless mode of life. John Macklin's career was a source of constant misery and anxiety to his father, who seems to have done all in his power by precept, education, and material assistance to render his son's life a prosperous one. He is said to

have been a young man of superior talents, but his conduct was marked throughout his life by selfishness and indolence. Perhaps Macklin did not sufficiently take into his consideration, when he mapped out his son's career, the weakness of his character and his want of self-control; but it must be remembered that Macklin was ambitious, eager for his son to make a figure in the world, and too convinced of his own talents for commerce and business to have any doubt about his son's.

Having given his son an excellent education, he obtained for him the situation of a writer in the East India Company's service at Fort St. George. Thither he went towards the end of 1769, under the warm patronage of Mr. Hastings, and with smiling prospects of good fortune before him. There are several letters from Macklin to his son during the next few years, which are printed in Kirkman's biography. They represent Macklin in a very amiable light. He is the fond but reasonable father, exhorting and admonishing his son in earnest and touching words, to lead a life worthy of himself. There is deep pathos in his remonstrances, when his son draws upon him for money, which Macklin can ill afford to let him have, or, with even greater selfishness, neglects opportunities of writing to his father. It would be pleasing to print these at length, as letters always suffer from being published in extracts. However, space not permitting this, I have taken some characteristic passages, by way of exhibiting the personal character of Macklin in his relations towards his son. The letters range over a period from December, 1769, to November, 1771.

In his first letter, Macklin desires his son to pay his court to Mr. Hastings. "I repeat it," he writes, "let Mr. Hastings be your example and your guide, for his

character is immaculate, his heart is good, and his understanding solid—a composition seldom to be met with in one man in these times." In this year (1769) Warren Hastings was appointed second in Council at Madras, and in 1772 he attained the highest office in the Company's service, namely, President of the Supreme Council in Bengal. Such a man was worth following, and young Macklin's fortune would have been made if he could have obtained his favour.

No young man in the eighteenth century attempted to make his way in life without attaching himself to a patron. A patron was a necessity of custom; but Macklin is careful to advise his son not to join in parties and cabals. In the same letter he writes, with the earnestness of one who has learned his lesson by bitter experience:—

"But do you not enter into any party or cabal whatever. Be of no party but that of gaining knowledge and making yourself useful to your employers; that is a party that can offend none, and a party that can never *forsake* or *betray* you. Depend upon it that every other party will do one or other, or both. I have lived long in the world, have had much experience in parties in my own sphere, have observed upon those in the state and other societies, and I declare that I never yet met with a man or woman in theatrical parties that was not perfidious; nor have I seen a party in the great world that has not made a sacrifice of them who ought to have been most supported; so that I beg that you never will let any man know what your judgment is of the parties of the company. Enter into none; pursue your study of making yourself useful; you will then depend upon what cannot desert you."

Writing of the vanity displayed in argument and conversation, Macklin gives some good advice to his son, which has, at the same time, an autobiographical interest:

"I have myself this disputatious desire to an offensive degree, and I believe that it has made me more enemies than all my follies or vices besides. I have at last seen my error, and I can now sit in company for hours, hear men of letters and high character in the world contend for the most false judgments, and which they believe in too—I say, I can now hear such conversations with great tranquillity, and never contradict or side with either party; nay, I find a secret pleasure in my *neutrality* that gratifies even the vanity of men in public conversation, because everybody is fond of excelling in knowledge and eloquence. It is a long time before men learn the *wisdom of neutrality* in conversation, especially men of parts or information; but it is wonderful how soon dull men and cunning men see the policy of it."

The first letter that John Macklin writes home is a sore disappointment to his father. There is no mention of Mr. Hastings in it; there is no mention of the journal which his father had charged him to keep, and "made him a book for that purpose;" but there are complaints that his living is expensive, and that he has no prospect of making money. These are embodied in a letter "blotted and scratched, with words omitted, sense imperfect, and so deficient in matter, and incorrect in every respect," that his parents were ashamed to show it to their friends. A little later Macklin learns that his son gambled away much of his money on the outward voyage, and, as time runs on, his letters become less frequent, though more importunate in their demands for further supplies of money.

In August, 1771, Macklin writes—

"The only account or hint of your being even alive, is a report which comes from Madras that you were about to come home. I asked the cause of your coming home, and was given to understand that it was your whim or caprice. Do you not think that this is a most alarming report to me

and your mother? You could not surely be so mad as to think of such an unpardonable, such an impolitic step—an indiscretion never to be atoned for."

In this very letter mention is made of a draft for £100 forwarded to his son, and this is the indulgent way in which Macklin meets a request for £500 for his son to trade with, hoping against hope that the request is evidence of a genuine desire on his son's part to make his way in the world.

"I did desire you to get Mr. Hastings, or any grave gentleman in the Council, if you have deserved such a friend, to say in a letter to Mr. Sayer, or to any friend here, that you may be trusted with £500 to trade with, and you shall have it though I were to borrow it. But were you to draw from me such a sum under the hypocritical pretext of trading with it, and game it away or dissipate it, it would be the greatest act of cruelty that a child could be guilty of to a parent. Age is advanced on me; sickness and debility are its attendants; and to strip me of that little which is to support your mother and me in that day when age and debility cannot have any succour but from past labour and economy, would be a disgrace to you, that would wound my heart deeper than asking alms would my pride; therefore think—ask your heart, ask your firmness—can you be trusted with that which is to support your mother and me in the hour of age's debility?"

He then speaks of his wife's illness, and continues—

". . . But she is recovering, to my great, great happiness; for if ever a woman deserved the sincerest and warmest esteem as wife and mother she does. Take her blessing—she sends it to you. But pray, my dear, do not afflict us by not writing; it is unkind, cruel. What can be the cause of it? If it be indolence, Heavens! what must I think of you? It can be nothing else; for you have as many opportunities as any other person in the settlement."

Soon after this, John Macklin, to his father's intense

disappointment, returned to England. During the rest of his life he made several fresh starts in new professions, but no one could help him to any self-control or power of application. Law he treated in the same spirit as commerce; and the hours of work in the Temple were entirely subservient to the more flattering amusements of Covent Garden. Having neglected the study of the law for some time, he is said to have gone into the army, and served in the American War. Cooke says he was in the army in India, but this is more than doubtful. It is not to be supposed that his early habits left him; and there are several stories of his eccentricity and wilful folly while serving in the army. For some years he lived on his father, who tried every possible method of reclaiming him, all, unfortunately, to no purpose, and he ultimately died of a complication of disorders, some of which were directly attributable to his careless mode of life. His story was the common one of a young man of talents with excellent prospects, ruining his own life, and embittering the lives of his parents, to gratify his own selfish tastes.

After his son's death, Macklin, who was over ninety, began to sink into decay. Unhappily, he was in straitened, almost indigent circumstances, scarcely able to satisfy his narrow wants. Although he had always received good salaries, and been well paid as actor and writer, yet his expenses had been heavy, he had engaged in several lengthy lawsuits, his son had dissipated what savings he had, and now in his old age he was extremely poor. About this date there came a time when he discovered that his whole fortune consisted in about £60 in money, and an annuity of about £10. At this crisis his friends were consulted, and it was at first suggested that he should have a benefit at Covent

Garden. This plan was afterwards changed, and, instead, it was decided to publish a subscription edition of *The Man of the World* and *Love à-la-Mode*, which Mr. Murphy was kind enough to edit for his old friend. This edition of his two plays, which was delivered to subscribers in 1793, produced no less than £1500, which was invested in an annuity of £200 for himself and £75 for his wife in case she survived him, and thus he was free from absolute want for the remainder of his life.

Of his life during these last years, in his brighter and more collected moments, there are many reminiscences. He was always to be found at the taverns and the theatres, and was looked upon as a marvel and a show. A writer in the *Monthly Mirror* describes how, about this time—

"Macklin came into Mr. Williams's coffee-house in Bow Street one night last winter after the play, and, having seated himself in the public room, he called lustily on the waiter to furnish him with a pint of white wine, a pint of water, some sugar, milk, and a basin of mashed potatoes. With these ingredients he went to work, emptied them all into a large bowl, and, having mixed them together for about a quarter of an hour to bring them to a proper consistency, he proceeded to take his supper. A few spoonfuls of this extraordinary dish soon gave him spirits, and he chatted with great humour with all the gentlemen present. But his conversation betrayed every moment the decay of his intellect ; he confounded terms, repeated sentences, and mingled subjects so perpetually, that it was nearly impossible to discover his meaning. He talked entirely of himself, of his acting, of his theatrical squabbles ; but, above all, his examination at Westminster Hall before Lord Mansfield some years ago, and congratulated himself exceedingly on the shrewdness he evinced on that occasion. About one o'clock the company retired, and the old gentleman was escorted to

his residence in Tavistock Row, 'hot with the Tuscan grape, and high in blood.'"

Cooke somewhat cruelly compares his condition in these last years to that of Swift's Struldbrugs, and, indeed, during the last three years of his life, his existence must have been very melancholy to his friends, though he himself was too incapable to realize his own sad condition. But, insensible as he was to what was passing around him, he still crawled about the theatre, more perhaps from force of habit than from any other cause.

"On these occasions," says Cooke, "the audience venerated his condition. On his appearance at the pit door, no matter how crowded the house was, they rose to make room for him, in order to give him his accustomed seat, which was the centre of the last bench near the orchestra. He generally walked home by himself, which was only on the other side of the Piazza; but, in crossing at the corner of Great Russel Street, he very deliberately waited till he saw the passage thoroughly cleared of coaches."

In these days he frequently imagined that he was opposed or injured, and he often made application at Bow Street for redress of his fancied wrongs. The magistrates used to hear him with compassion, but, even while they were talking to him about his wrongs, the whole subject would fly from his mind, and he was unable to recall the original causes of his application.

In 1795, some over-zealous friends of the actor suggested that he should speak a congratulatory address from the stage to the Prince and Princess of Wales, on their first appearance at Covent Garden after their marriage. A short interlude was written, in which the characters were Time, Hymen, Cupid, and Macklin.

It was a foolish piece of snobbery, and luckily Macklin's more sensible friends dissuaded him from attempting to play in it, and the little piece was never performed.

The accounts of his last hours differ slightly in detail, but Cooke's account is perhaps as likely to be accurate as any other.

"The hour at last arrived," he writes, "which was to number the days of this extraordinary old man. Some little time before this took place, he grew weaker and weaker; he was unable to go downstairs, and contented himself with walking about his room, and resting himself on his bed (or rather his couch, where he generally slept with his clothes on night and day for many years). In one of these reposes some friends were talking of him in the room, thinking, from his state of insensibility for many days before, that he was incapable of hearing or understanding them, when he suddenly started up and answered with some sharpness. This was thought to forebode some recovery; but it was only the last blaze in the socket. The evening of that day he composed himself, as it was thought for sleeping, but in this sleep he made his final exit without a groan."

Thus died Charles Macklin, actor and playwright, on Tuesday, the 11th of July, 1797.

When one examines in detail Macklin's works and days, one cannot but admit that he had a good influence on the stage, both morally and theatrically. It is very tempting for a biographer to rate this too highly, to see in the records of the time but one figure, to make that figure, and that alone, the centre of all the movements with which it is in any way connected. To guard against this, I have, wherever it seemed feasible, given the exact words of those who knew and lived with the man, in preference to any paraphrases of my own. If I am right in my estimate of Macklin's life, his chief and most important character was that of dramatic tutor.

Many laymen, among them, it is said, Edmund Burke himself, owe their powers of elocution to Macklin's guidance of their first steps; and, as we have seen, numerous actors were successfully introduced to the stage through his means.

Not only was he a sound teacher, but he did much to introduce a more natural intonation and mode of delivery in stage elocution. Dr. Hill gives a very just account of the services he rendered to the stage in this respect.

"There was a time, indeed," he says, "when everything in tragedy, if it was but the delivering a common message, was spoken in high heroics; but of late years this absurdity has been in a great measure banished from the English as well as the French stage. The French owe this rational improvement in their tragedy to Baron and Madam Cauvreur, and we to that excellent player Mr. Macklin. The pains he took while entrusted with the care of the actors at Drury Lane, and the attention which the success of those pains acquired him from the now greatest actors of the English theatre, have founded for us a new method of the delivering tragedy from the first-rate actors, and banished the bombast that used to wound our ears continually from the mouths of the subordinate ones, who were eternally aiming to mimic the majesty that the principal performers employed on scenes that were of the utmost consequence, in the delivery of the most simple and familiar phrases, adapted to the trivial occasions which were afforded them to speak on.

"It is certain that the players ought very carefully to avoid a too lofty and sonorous delivery when a sentiment only, not a passion, is to be expressed; it ought, also, as the excellent instructor just mentioned used eternally to be inculcating into his pupils, to be always avoided when a simple recital of facts was the substance of what was to be spoken, or when pure and cool reasoning was the sole meaning of the scene; but, though he banished noise and vehemence on these occasions, he allowed that on many

others, the pompous and sounding delivery were just—nay, were necessary, in this species of playing, and that no other manner of pronouncing the words was fit to accompany the thought the author expressed by them, or able to convey it to the audience in its intended and proper dignity."

Of his powers of acting, of the parts he acted, and of his position as a playwright, enough has been said. Of his personal character it is difficult to form a just estimate. His enemies vilified him, his friends flattered him; but, with a knowledge of the conduct of his life, and with the strongly painted portraits of the man before us, one is able in some sense to realize the man and his manners. Congreve seems to us to draw a not inaccurate picture of Macklin, the man, in the following words:—

"In his person Macklin was rather above the middle height, not corpulent, but of a robust make of body. The lineaments of his countenance were strongly marked, and highly expressive of sensibility; his complexion was cadaverous, and much resembling that of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox. His friend Fielding, who may be allowed to be a judge of physiognomy, has characterized him under the title of 'that sour-face dog Macklin.' There certainly was an austerity, if not moroseness, in his looks, which, however, seemed to change into complacency on a closer circumspection. He was remarkably upright in his stature, both off and on the stage, and disdained all that 'turning of arms and tripping of legs,' etc., which modern actors make use of to aid their delivery."

This being an honest but at the same time a friendly picture of Macklin, one can understand the following somewhat unkindly remarks of Lee Lewis, and discount them to their fair value:—

"If a painter," says Lewis, "wanted a stern, sour countenance for the left-hand of a *Resurrection piece*, Macklin was always a fine subject. In his manner he was brutish; he

was not to be softened into modesty either by sex or age. I have seen his levity make the matron blush; beauty and innocence were no safeguard against his rudeness—'At which the soft-eyed virgin has been cruelly obliged to shed the tender tear.'

"When he entered the list of controversy (for he was one that would dispute on any subject with Sir Isaac Newton), he could only defend his opinions by dogmatic argument, and then so oratorically clumsy, as showed he could neither polish a paradox nor illustrate truth. What Danton said of Marat may be applied to him, 'He was volcanic, peevish, and unsociable.'"

Yet, side by side with this, we should remember O'Keeffe's estimate of his character—and he knew him at least as well as Lee Lewis—when he tells us that his conversation among young people was always perfectly moral, that he hated swearing, and discountenanced vulgar jests.

Of the intellectual side of his character it would be easy to speak too highly. Dr. Johnson is said to have referred to Macklin when he spoke of one whose conversation was a "perpetual renovation of hope with a constant disappointment." In truth, like many self-educated people, he overrated the value of his knowledge. There was a want of humility about him that is seldom found in the really learned. He dogmatized with the freedom of Dr. Johnson, but without his authority. Nevertheless, he had amassed a considerable amount of knowledge in his time, was an observer of human nature, studied character, but from a somewhat narrow and theatrical point of view, and was thereby enabled, as we have seen, to produce two plays much above the average in writing and construction. Strong minded, honest in purpose, keen to reform abuses, but, at the same time, hot headed, impetuous,

and conceited, Macklin made many warm friends and many bitter enemies. Every one, however, speaks highly of his judgment, and many hail him as "Nestor," or as "Father of the Stage." If he could not himself enact the various characters of tragedy, he could inspire others and show them how to perfect their impersonations. As his friend the Inspector said of him, "He knows the foundation of the art better than them all; he designs it, less beautifully than some, more accurately than any. He better understands the nature of the human frame, and the situation and power of its muscles, than any man who ever played; nor has any man ever understood it like him as a science." In character and in comedy he was great, and in all he attempted earnest and intelligent.

"Dark was his col'ring, but conception strong;
If hard his manner, still it ne'er was wrong.
Warm'd with the poet, to the part he rose;
His anger fir'd us, and his terror froze.
And more; where quaintness shut out meaning's day,
Macklin threw light with fine discernment's ray;
If these are truths which envy's self must breathe,
Applause should crown him with her greenest wreath."

LIST OF PLAYS WRITTEN BY CHARLES MACKLIN.

1. King Henry the Seventh ; or, The Popish Impostor. *Tragedy.* 8vo. 1746.
2. A Will or No Will ; or, A Bone for the Lawyers. *Farce.* 1746. (Not printed.)
3. The Suspicious Husband Criticized ; or, The Plague of Envy. *Farce.* 1747. (Not printed.)
4. The Fortune Hunters ; or, The Widow Bewitched. *Farce.* 1748. (Not printed.)
5. Covent Garden Theatre. *Dramatic Satire.* 1752. (Not printed.)
6. Love à-la-Mode. *Farce.* 1760. 4to, 1793.
7. The Married Libertine. *Comedy.* 1761. (Not printed.)
8. The True-Born Irishman. *Farce.* 1763. (Not printed.) This was afterwards acted under the title of "The Irish Fine Lady." *Farce.* 1767. (Not printed.)
9. The True-Born Scotchman. *Comedy.* 1766. (Not printed.) Afterwards acted at Covent Garden, under the title of "The Man of the World." *Comedy.* 1781. 4to, 1793.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS PERFORMED BY MACKLIN IN LONDON, FROM 1733 TO 1781.*

Drury Lane, 1733–34.

Captain Brazen	*Recruiting Officer.*
Marplot	*Busy-Body.*
Clodio	*Love Makes a Man.*
Teague	*Committee.*
* Colonel Bluff	*Intriguing Chambermaid.*
Brass	*Confederacy.*
Lord Lace	*Lottery.*
Marquis	*Country House.*
Lord Foppington	*Careless Husband.*

Haymarket, 1734.

* Squire Badger	*Don Quixote in England.*

Drury Lane, 1734–35.

Poins	*Henry IV.*
Abel	*Committee.*
Ramilie	*Miser.*
Mustacho	*Tempest* (Dryden's).
Captain Strut	*Double Gallant.*
Sancho	*Love Makes a Man.*
Clincher, junr.	*Constant Couple.*
Thomas Appletree	*Recruiting Officer.*
Petulant	*Way of the World.*
* Manly (Petruchio)	*Cure for a Scold.*
Whisper	*Busy-Body.*
Snip	*Merry Cobbler.*
Sancho	*Trick for Trick.*
* Wormwood	*Virgin Unmasked.*

* This list is founded on those given by Kirkman and Cooke, amplified and corrected by reference to Genest. A few obscure characters, which cannot be verified, are omitted. The characters marked with an asterisk are those which Macklin "created."

DRURY LANE, 1735–36.

* Cheatly	*Connoisseur.*
Snap	*Love's Last Shift.*
Second Gravedigger	*Hamlet.*
Caliban (?)	*Tempest.*

DRURY LANE, 1736–37.

Young Cash	*Wife's Relief.*
Razor	*Provoked Wife.*
* Captain Brag	*Darby Captain.*
Jeffery	*Amorous Widow.*
Cheatly	*Squire of Alsatia.*
* Captain Weazel	*Eurydice; or, Devil Henpecked.*
Subtleman	*Twin Rivals.*
* Asino	*Universal Passion.*

DRURY LANE, 1737–38.

Quaint	*Æsop.*
Lord Froth	*Double Dealer.*
Francis	*Henry IV.*
Poins	*Henry IV.* (Part II.).
Jerry Blackacre	*Plain Dealer.*
Osric	*Hamlet.*
Peachum	*Beggar's Opera.*
Count Basset	*Provoked Husband.*
Cutbeard	*Silent Woman.*
Face	*Alchemist.*
Lory	*Relapse.*
Coupee	*Virgin Unmasked.*
Orange Wench	*Man of the Mode.*
Jeremy	*Love for Love.*
Sir Hugh Evans	*Merry Wives.*
Lord Foppington	*Relapse.*
Scrub	*Beaux' Stratagem.*
Setter	*Old Bachelor.*
Tattle	*Love for Love.*

Poet	*Mother-in-Law.*
* Bays	*Coffee-House.*
Beau Mordecai	*Harlot's Progress.*
Man of Taste (Martin) ...	*Man of Taste.*
Roxana	*Rival Queans* (burlesque).

DRURY LANE, 1738–39.

Ben	*Love for Love.*
Sir Polidorus Hogstye ...	*Æsop.*
Trappanti	*She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not.*
Numps	*Tender Husband.*
Squib	*Tunbridge Walks.*
Teague	*Twin Rivals.*
Sir Philip Modelove	*Bold Stroke for a Wife.*
Don Choleric	*Love Makes a Man.*
Beau Clincher	*Constant Couple.*
Old Mirabel	*Inconstant.*
Sir Fopling Flutter	*Man of the Mode.*
Mad Welchman	*Pilgrim.*
John Moody	*Provoked Husband.*
Foigard	*Beaux' Stratagem.*
Second Citizen	*Julius Cæsar.*
Butler	*Drummer.*

DRURY LANE, 1739–40.

Sir William Belfond	*Squire of Alsatia.*
Bullock	*Recruiting Officer.*
Trincalo	*Tempest* (Dryden's).
Jacomo	*Libertine Destroyed.*
* Drunken Man	*Lethe.*
Lovegold	*Miser.*
Tom	*Conscious Lovers.*
Trim	*Funeral.*
Sir Novelty Fashion	*Love's Last Shift.*
Sir Jasper Fidget	*Country Wife.*
Sir Francis Wronghead ...	*Provoked Husband.*
Clodpole	*Amorous Widow.*

DRURY LANE, 1740–41.

Fondlewife	*Old Bachelor.*
Sir John Dawe	*Silent Woman.*
Higgin	*Royal Merchant.*
Malvolio	*Twelfth Night.*
Shylock	*Merchant of Venice.*
Toby Guzzle	*Rural Sports.*

DRURY LANE, 1741–42.

Old Woman	*Rule a Wife.*
Sir John Brute	*Provoked Wife.*
Touchstone	*As You Like It.*
Gomez	*Spanish Friar.*
Clown	*All's Well.*
Corvino	*Volpone.*
Sir Paul Plyant	*Double Dealer.*
* Zorobabel	*Miss Lucy in Town.*
Dromio of Syracuse (?) ...	*Comedy of Errors.*
Queen Dollallolla	*Tom Thumb.*
Rigdum Funnidos	*Chrononhotonthologos.*

DRURY LANE, 1742–43.

Mock Doctor	*Mock Doctor.*
Noll Bluff	*Old Bachelor.*
First Gravedigger	*Hamlet.*
Brazen	*Recruiting Officer.*
* Mr. Steadfast	*Wedding Day.*
Gloster (?)	*Jane Shore.*

HAYMARKET, 1744.

Iago	*Othello.*
Loveless	*Relapse.*
Ghost	*Hamlet.*

DRURY LANE, 1745–46.

* Huntly	*Henry VII.*
Stephano	*Tempest* (Shakespeare's).

Sir Roger	*Scornful Lady.*
Storm	*Lying Lover.*
Lucio	*Measure for Measure.*
Sir John Airy	*She Gallants.*
Major Cadwallader	*Humours of the Army.*

DRURY LANE, 1746–47.

Sir Gilbert Wrangle	*Refusal.*
Gripus	*Amphitryon.*
Witch	*Macbeth.*
Pandulph	*King John.*

DRURY LANE, 1747–48.

Pandolfo	*Albumazar.*
Captain Flash	*Miss in Her Teens.*
Fluellin	*Henry V.*
* Faddle	*Foundling.*
Sciolto	*Fair Penitent.*
Strictland	*Suspicious Husband.*
Meleander (?)	*Lover's Melancholy.*

COVENT GARDEN, 1750–51.

Mercutio	*Romeo and Juliet.*
Polonius	*Hamlet.*
Vellum	*Drummer.*
Don Manuel	*She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not.*
Sir Oliver Cockwood	*She Would if She Could.*
Sir Wilfred Witwould ...	*Way of the World.*

COVENT GARDEN, 1751–52.

Barnaby Brittle	*Amorous Widow.*
Lopez	*False Friend.*
Lopez	*Mistake.*
Mad Englishman	*Pilgrim.*

COVENT GARDEN, 1752–53.

Renault ... ... *Venice Preserved.*
Buck ... ... *Englishman in Paris.*

DRURY LANE, 1759–60.

* Sir Archy MacSarcasm ... *Love à-la-Mode.*

COVENT GARDEN, 1760–61.

* Lord Belville ... ... *Married Libertine.*

SMOCK ALLEY, DUBLIN, 1763–64.

* Murrough O'Dogherty ... *Irish Fine Lady* (*True-Born Irishman*).

COVENT GARDEN, 1773–74.

Macbeth ... ... *Macbeth.*

COVENT GARDEN, 1776–77.

Richard III. ... ... *Richard III.*

COVENT GARDEN, 1780–81.

* Sir Pertinax MacSycophant *Man of the World.*

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